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LOVE'S ARROW.

BY A. P. M., JR.

Over a sea of silver stars,
Darting across the blue of night,
Swift as the bright electric cars,
A youthful spirit took its flight,
Feasting its gaze
On the gentle maze—
And then its quick eyes earthward turned
To a cot where a low light burned.
Within this cot, on the cushioned floor,
A lover knelt to his lady fair,
And though she heark'd to his ardent pour
Of words, he saw no promise there.
All hope seemed dead,
And passion dead—
Despair was in his tortured breast,
And why this scene, the spirit guess'd.
Silently came the child of air,
Into the cot where the lover knelt,
Where the young girl so proud and fair,
Never the baits of love had felt,
And bent his bow,
And sent a throe
Of love into that heart so cold,
Weaving its bliss like threads of gold.
'Twas soul in soul and lip to lip,
The lovers dreamed the hours o'er,
With smiles and many a nectared sip
Of joys that were denied no more.
And while the pair
Sat whispering there,
The glorious spirit winged its flight
Again on its journey through the night.

Madame Durand's Proteges;

OR,

THE FATEFUL LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "STRANGELY WED," "CECIL'S DE-
CEIT," "ADRIA THE ADOPTED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

MADAME.

A desolate wilderness of a place, closed in around by Pennsylvania hills, which mocked its title of Fairview Glen. The village was long and narrow, the heights precipitous, broken and dangerous. The hillsides were covered with thick growths of somber, scrubby pines, with silver birches, oaks, and chestnuts, mingling sparsely in the heavy foliage.

Fairview village straggled in irregular line, its squat houses clinging fast in notches and declines, with a couple of tolerably accurate streets lying in the level stretch which bordered the deep, rock-bound, noisy creek, that gurgled complacently through unseen crevices, and twisted like a snake through the dark ravines.

At the top of the glen, a mile or more from Fairview, was a granite-built manse where dwelt Madame Durand, whose sterile yet withal profitable possessions extended for miles on every side.

A pedestrian was clambering up the footpath which led by a more direct route than the winding road to the manse. A little wiry man, well past middle age, with grizzled hair sleekly combed, and a cadaverous countenance, which would have worn a decidedly dyspeptic look but for the glimmer of cheery good-humor expressed in the bright blue eyes which time had in no wise dimmed. He had a quick, nervous motion which betrayed the working of a restless mind, and accompanied the soliloquy he was indulging in by gesticulating, and checking off the points he mentally decided with a lean forefinger on the palm of the opposite hand.

"One—two—three," he counted. "Yes, positively three times that Madame Durand has sent for me in hot haste within a week. First to make an extension of Winston's lease, as though my time were of no value that I should employ it in trotting up this mountain-side for merely that! Then, to have me go quietly over the books of that young agent she has taken to the manse of late, and right glad I am to be rid of the charge of rents and taxes she has saddled on him. No use of my trouble, either; the young fellow is open and honest as the day. Not a flaw in his accounts and the books perfect; couldn't keep them better myself. I only wish the other *proteges*—the one she has planted in my office against my wish and will, I'll confess—had something like his method and application.

"Mighty queer woman is the madame! A bed of quicksand, a deceitful sea, a cat's paw in a velvet case, when she's smiling; a small tornado, a fire-spitting volcano, when her ire's roused. I'm the only man in the village that's not afraid of her, I believe, always excepting my young law-student, and he would face St. Michael himself. A reckless lad that, and not bound for much good, I doubt me."

The wiry little lawyer paused to take breath and to shake his head ominously, but continued his soliloquy when he pursued his walk again.

"And now what the madame may want is beyond my guess. Some fool's errand, I dare say. The woman will take no advice, so there's scarcely a hope she will attend to the one matter that, if I had my way, should be a nightmare to her till it is done. Does she expect to live as long as Methuselah, I wonder?"

He passed through a side gate into the grounds belonging immediately to the manse.

A couple of flats in the form of terraces, which occupied the space in front of the building, were crowded with flower-beds of fantastic shape, with white-pebbled walks twisting like shiny-scaled serpents between.

It was one of the madame's whims to dispense with right-angles; so beds and walks formed a complication of curves



"We are both beauties, but there's no reason why we should be rivals on that account."

curious to witness. A stretch of turf lawn on one side was separated by a low, well-trimmed hedge from the sharp decline of the mountain-side. On the other, orchards of various fruits deepened into a grove of the native forest trees.

The house was built of solid granite blocks, with a round tower rising on the northern side. Two square facades, facing the west, were separated by a smaller square like an uninclosed court. This was approached by a half-dozen granite steps, and was paved with alternate squares of black and gray. Three or four great entrance-doors opened upon a piazza which encircled this court.

Madame Durand had divested the whole front of a grim, formidable aspect by filling the open square with growing plants. Older trees in immense boxes, prickly cacti, and glossy-leaved orange trees, well protected from searching winds; geraniums and running vines in huge porphyry vases; vivid mosses and feathery ferns springing from the crevices of two miniature pyramids composed of unique specimens of the native rocks.

With scarcely a glance about him, the lawyer walked briskly up to one of the entrance-doors, and plied the knocker on the heavy oaken panel.

He was ushered in by a dignified, white-haired servant-man, who boasted of having spent the greater part of his life in the service of the Durands. He was shown into an octagonal room, furnished with solid antique wood and brocatel, darkened and worn by the usage of half a century. Square easements, where the tiny panes had been replaced by double sheets of plate-glass, were partially obscured by painted shades. Pots of rose-geranium filled a recess, pervading the room with their fragrance.

The lawyer was standing still in the center of the room when the sharp ring of a cane in an uncarpeted side corridor made itself heard, and a door swung open to admit Madame Durand.

A grotesque little figure, straight and lithe, though the weight of seventy years rested upon it. The door clanged behind her, and the madame stood with her hands clasped over the top of her ebony stick, her

face turned scrutinizingly toward her visitor.

A remarkable face it was, too. Oval and rounded as a girl's, with a skin rich in texture as the leaf of a calla lily, but yellowed and wrinkled; a mouth that was firm to obstinacy, with a satirical expression lurking in the corners which betrayed little of philanthropic views; and jet-black, twinkling eyes, piercing as a hawk's.

Madame's wrinkled little hands sparkled with brilliants, and long, glittering pendants drooped from her ears. Her dress was a purple brocade, cut after the fashion of a half-century ago; the square bodice was filled with lace, yellow as the madame's own mellowed complexion. A slender chain of gold and jet encircled her neck, suspending a cross composed of the same materials.

The lawyer stared at her stupidly, evidently unaccustomed to such magnificence. Madame laughed; hers had been a musical laugh once, years ago, but it was shrill and disjointed in its triumphant cadence now.

"A very good day to you, Mr. Thancroft," she cried, in a high-pitched, vivacious tone. "Good gracious, man, what has come over you? you are speechless as a mute and staring as an owl. Fortunately I'm not easily disconcerted, now, isn't it?"

The lawyer bowed low, and muttered an apology as he placed her a chair.

"Ah, say nothing, say nothing," interrupted madame, graciously, waving him to a seat near her. "I see exactly how it is. You are surprised to see such a butterfly emerge from the chrysalis of my old black velvet and close cap. You didn't know I could grace the Durand jewels still with any sort of dignity. Truth to tell, I doubted it, too, and decked myself sparingly, lest I might appear like a death's head arrayed for the banquet. I am gratified; I am back in my old element again. I say to myself: 'Glen, madame! your old power has not yet gone from you.' Almost like the great Alexander, I sigh that there are no more fields to win, no more foes to conquer. First, I quelled those who opposed me; then I conquered myself; and now, is it not pitiful? I have no one to sympathize with me in

my new taste of the old familiar grandeur."

She spread out her hands, with their load of glittering stones. The pride of the Durands was like a great spreading tree, and two particular branches, which madame delighted in, were her pride of her own well-preserved comeliness, and of the Durand jewels, which were noted for their magnificence.

The lawyer met her half-mocking glance with one of quiet research.

Madame's moods were so chameleon-like he was puzzled often to know how much sincerity her words contained.

"Whose fault is it that you have not one closely allied, who would joy with you or sorrow with you—who would add pleasure to your happiness, and comfort you in grief?"

"My own, perhaps," returned madame, complacently. "You don't suppose that I would submit to that much interference from another quarter, Mr. Thancroft?"

"Madame," burst forth the lawyer, impetuously, "you have warned me to silence on this subject more than once, but I will speak now; I will follow out my own view of duty by urging you to do justice to your own kin, at risk of all the friendship and interest that are between us. Our own claims are quits! You are a good friend to me. I am a good ally to you—neither is hidden beyond individual inclination. Heaven knows, if I have any influence with you I have striven faithfully to throw it into the balance in behalf of the boy who comes of your blood, and who is a floating waif somewhere, on the cold charity of the world for all I know, or any one else but you. You, madame, are unjustly holding him out of his own; you admitted once that you have kept him in ignorance of his own origin, his true sphere, his rightful inheritance. Have you no natural affection that your vindictiveness must reach beyond the grave to the innocent offspring, whose sole offense was, after all, a slight one?"

"Madame, let me implore you, do not disregard the duty which devolves upon you. Do justice to your son's son if you would escape the rackings of remorse when it is too late."

Twice madame had essayed to check his tumultuous flow of words, and now she raised her ebony stick, stamping it angrily upon the floor.

"Ah, presumption!" she cried, sibilantly. "Another word and I will have you turned away from my door. I will disgrace you; I will take from you my patronage; I will unmake you as I have made you. Oh, ingratitude! you—you to dictate to me. No more—no more!"

She half-rose in her chair, gesticulating violently, and quivering with indignation.

"I can say nothing more, madame. What can I hope to gain by it if no impulse of your heart responds to my appeal?"

"Heart!" cried madame. "You speak of hearts! What do you expect me to care for hearts when I glory in having none? Bah! I suffered enough before I rid myself of the troublesome incubation. I have an organ answering to the demands of actual life and perfect health. I have a brain and a will not to be blunted by any pettifogger. I have a digestion, a very good digestion, and so keep in cheerful tone. But of heart, as you define it, I have none, thank Heaven!"

"I trust you deceive yourself, madame."

"What! would you have me racked by tortures, torn by grief, consumed by inward fires? The remembrance of what I endured sets me aflame, but having no heart, I have no pain, and dismiss it, so!"

She extended her hands, palms outward, and sunk back into her seat, suddenly calm.

"You should not provoke me to anger," she said. "I can't afford to quarrel with you, and you know it. There, there! I sent for you in the way of business."

"To make your will, madame?"

"My will!" shrieked Madame Durand, shivering and shaking her stick at him menacingly. "Do you want me to die, man? Ah, you would like to be appointed sole executor; you would like a mourning-ring, and a well-stocked farm, and a set of silver plate, as kind remembrances. My will! People always die after they make their wills."

"Sometimes they die before," suggested the lawyer, maliciously.

"What pity!" retorted madame. "Then honest lawyers lose their fees."

"A truce to quabbling," said Mr. Thancroft. "Come to your point, madame. Let us not waste time to no purpose."

"Truly, a man's way of covering a retreat," scoffed madame. "Cowards—traitors, all of them. I wonder you are not ashamed of your sex, Mr. Thancroft."

"Business, madame, business!"

"Very well, then," Madame metamorphosed in a moment. She caressed her jeweled hands, looking placidly before her.

"You wondered at seeing me without my somber attire. Do so no longer; I have determined to inaugurate a new state of affairs here at the manse. I shall turn another leaf in my book of life, Mr. Thancroft."

"I want more vitality in the house. What would you say to introducing a younger generation?"

He regarded her with inquiring interest, but silently inclining his head, awaited her further explanation.

"I have learned that there are two young girls of the Durand blood, coming of another distinct branch but distantly allied to me, both poor and obscure. I want them looked up and brought here to be provided for at my expense. Who knows but I may conclude to make one of them my heir-ess?"

"Madame!" ejaculated the lawyer, aghast.

"Hold your peace then, and let me alone to follow my own course. What I want of you is to find those girls and bring them here to me. Erne will give you my written instructions. Good-morning to you, Mr. Thancroft."

Madame Durand dismissed him abruptly with a peremptory wave of her jeweled hand.

And the lawyer, going slowly out through the little court, shook his head and muttered to himself in a very dissatisfied way.

CHAPTER II.

MADAME'S PROTEGES.

A young man lounged on the bank of the noisy little creek, with fishing-tackle lying idle beside him. Inert and listless as he seemed, with half-closed eyes and lazy attitude, he did not look like a vapid dreamer.

His features were straight and regular, with the low, broad brow and short curving upper lip seldom seen except in statuary. His collar was thrown open, exposing his neck like a white, strong column. His hair was brown, glistened with bronze, and lay in short waves about a head which, in its perfect classic outlines, might have served as a model of some Greek god.

Nature is neither stint nor mercenary in her good gifts; she does not bestow lavishly on any one class or station. Judged by his personal endowments this young man, handsome as Apollo Belydere, might have been taken for a prince of the blood; yet he was only Lucian Ware, Mr. Thancroft's law-student.

He half turned his head as a step came down the rocky pathway and was dejected on the thick turf of the bank where he lay, but seeing the new-comer made no further change of his position.

"You, Valere?" he said, with a yawn.

"I thought it might be old Thancroft's shadow—North, you know. Such a spooner, so devoted to the interests of the office as he has it. Unnecessarily honest and deucedly vexatious to toe the mark after his style, I say. I gave him the slip to-day, after the boss was off, and got here for a little quiet enjoyment."

"Which I have interrupted, I suppose. Did you hear me in your dreams, or were n't you asleep?"

"I was thinking how blank North will look when he finds his old musty documents uncopied. Madame deserves my grateful thanks no doubt, but I wish she had found me a more agreeable berth than Thancroft's snugger."

"It was your own choice, if I remember."

"Hobson's choice, you mean. There was no alternative presented."

"The professions were all open to you."

"One is good as another," returned Ware. "I hate drudgery, and the professions are made of it. Look at the boss, for instance; he is nothing more than an animated machine to carry out the whims of other people. What pleasure does he find in such a narrow existence, think you?"

"The consciousness of being of use to his fellow-man, perhaps."

"Stuff! We are beyond the age of Quixotic enterprises, my dear fellow, and just as far ahead of such philanthropic notions as you would ascribe. Of course Thancroft don't realize his own littleness, but a man with a soul above trifles could never content himself while so prescribed."

"Meaning the illustration to apply to yourself."

"Exactly. Think of me writing out cases or dancing attendance to the madame's will. Fough!"

"Is not that an unfortunate view to take of it? How do you reconcile the application of your life and labor with such discontent?"

"I don't pretend to," returned Ware.

The other, a young man of apparently about Ware's own age, which scarcely exceeded two-and-twenty, leaned against the trunk of a neighboring birch tree, gazing thoughtfully down into the stream below. He was taller, heavier and darker than his handsome companion, but his countenance was prepossessing, and his appearance that of a well-bred gentleman. His name was Erne Valere, and he was the youthful agent whom Madame Durand had latterly employed to the relief of Mr. Thancroft, who had hitherto been burdened by the sole charge of all the business. The young man's office was onerous without accruing much of honor; he kept the accounts of a half-dozen farms scattered at some distance further up the mountain; of the cattle and produce each yielded for they were sterile lands fit for little except pasturage. Madame had grown rich from them, however, so steady had been the success of her speculations in stock-raising.

These two young men were her proteges! Madame was eccentric even in her charities, and while it was supposed that she had some deeper reason than mere beneficence in seeing them educated and provided for, her real motive—if she had a concealed one—had not been unveiled from obscurity.

Erne Valere had apartments at the manse since his entrance upon his new duties, and received his instructions generally from Madame herself. But, apart from these business interviews, he received neither courtesy nor observation from Madame except on stated occasions, when the two young men were invited together to dine with their patroness. Each had received the customary notification upon the morning of the day, some two weeks subsequent to the interview chronicled between the madame and her lawyer.

Lucian Ware lay upon the turf bank plucking idly at the blades of grass, but as his companion displayed no inclination to break the silence which had fallen between them, he addressed him again petulantly.

"Are you taking your turn at dreaming now, Valere? A pretty one to preach morality of action—*you*?"

"I have not yet done so, but I would assuredly if I thought my words would have effect."

"Spare yourself; I have been following the bent of your mind. It is a very transparent mask that you wear."

"You are acute at reading human nature."

"I don't find much good in it then to reward me for the study; though if I did I would scarcely follow it. I detest you men of earnest minds if they have no devilry in them."

Ware was cynical, to an extent painful in one so young. Selfishness and egotism were his leading characteristics, but were toned not unpleasantly to the general sight by a fastidiousness of taste which covered the glaring conspicuity of his faults.

"I wish you were not so skeptical, Lucian," said Erne, concernedly. "You rob your life of much that would be pleasant in it but for that distrust of mankind—yourself inclusive—you so persistently cling to."

"You mistake," interrupted Ware. "I do not distrust myself. I have the utmost confidence in my own capacity for either good or evil; I wonder if it is a perversion of nature that I incline to the latter. I think I could take a kind of supreme satisfaction in knowing myself bad to the very core, not one of your coarse, bloodthirsty ruffians, but a gentlemanly scoundrel who could smile and smile and be a villain still."

"Then, don't look so shocked, Valere; I haven't compassed my ambition yet, what ever I may do in time."

"You speak recklessly, Lucian. Life is too full of glorious possibilities for such a satire on it as you picture, and should not be viewed in the way you see it. The indulgence of these vague dreams is a profitless way of spending idle time."

"Stolen time, my good Erne; stolen to indulge this very profitless amusement. Doubtless you think I am wasting the precious dust of time to my own irremediable loss, but you should remember that striking instances of genius have developed from unexpected sources. I will make a bold stroke some day which shall leave me lord of the caste, recognized in even our republican land."

"Take care, my lord, that your castle does not tumble about your ears, provided any thing so unsubstantial as air can be demolished."

"I might have known you would have no sympathy with my aspirations."

"All worthy aspirations claim my sympathy."

"Fair in my sight, foul in yours, perhaps. To change the subject, you have been bidden to the feast to-night, I suppose."

"Yes; Madame has extended the customary invitation."

"Not quite, for this is an extra occasion. Have you never learned the art of putting two and two together?"

"I fail to comprehend."

"Have you been made acquainted with Madame's latest whim? She is not content with sheltering you and I beneath her motherly wing, but has hunted up a couple of poverty-stricken female relatives to share our favor. Don't I hope they may be gushing girls of the period whose boisterous proclivities shall make the madame rue her assumed responsibility? Old Thancroft was in high dudgeon, and betrayed more of the matter than he was authorized to do, I imagine."

"Then do not repeat the information you chanced to gain, Lucian. You should respect the wishes of our patroness, even though her commands do not weigh upon you."

"You are too conscientious by half, Erne. There is nothing secret in what I have heard—nothing but you might have known had you unbent from your dignity far enough to have questioned the servants at the manse. There, don't look so thunderous, brave champion of morality! No one would suspect you of yielding to such inexcusable curiosity. In your place, I should have sought the madame, and begged to be admitted to her confidence; but then, I am not troubled with your ridiculous scruples."

"These young ladies Madame has unearthed come from some far-away branch of the Durands, yet it is received as a fact already settled, that she intends leaving her wealth to one of them, provided always that she does not veer off on some other tack before deciding which. And that brings me back to my starting-point. Our invitation to dinner to-day will include a presentation to the new acquisitions."

"If you are correct, there will be a marked distinction between Madame Durand's prospective heiress and Lucian Ware, the penniless law student, or Erne Valere, Madame's salaried agent."

"Yes; but only one of the young ladies is to become the heiress. Madame has repeatedly declared that the property shall not be separated. They are both equally allied to her, and she will feel bound to provide in some manner for the least fortunate of the two. What easier than to marry her to one of the dependent young men and pension the pair, thus comfortably ridding herself of them? Madame is a deep one in her way, though she isn't apt to consider all the consequences."

"Well, Madame has a right to engineer her own pleasure," remarked Erne. "I must be moving, for I am not quite through for the day."

"Do as do—slip the traces."

Valere shook his head smilingly.

"That is not my way of doing business, Lucian. Better reconsider, and go back in time to redeem yourself in Mr. Thancroft's opinion."

"I've a notion to astonish North for this one time, not from any ideas of duty, but because I'll have your company on the way."

Valere waited while the other gathered up his unused fishing-rod, and adjusted his collar with a hasty twitch.

Ware was not lacking in agility and nimbleness of motion when once roused from his listless attitude. He sprang lightly up the rocky path, and kept easy pace with his companion's quick steps when they reached the winding road.

"If it were not for the trouble, I would be inclined to circumvent Madame at her own game," he said, carelessly, but with a keen side-glance at the other.

"In what manner, pray?"

"By marrying the heiress. Our patroness has not taken that possibility into consideration."

"And you, Lucian, had better drop the contemplation, at least until you have something more than idle surmise to work upon."

They walked on for a little space in utter silence, and then the roll of an approaching carriage drew their attention. It passed them presently, an open phaeton containing two female figures in traveling wraps and close veils, and Mr. Thancroft on the seat with the coachman.

Lucian Ware took off his hat with a flourish, and executed a low bow of mock obeisance after the receding vehicle.

"Welcome to the heiress of all Fairview. May she be subtle enough to propitiate the madame, and possess discrimination to appreciate the worth of your humble servant."

CHAPTER III.

MADAME'S NEW CHARGES.

THE phaeton paused before the outer gates, for Madame would have no carriage-way leading through the grounds to the entrance.

The little lawyer clambered down and in his stiff, old-fashioned way, assisted the two girls to alight. They glanced about them, gaining their first impression of their new home, which Mr. Thancroft's customary reticence had not prompted him to describe.

They were ushered together into Madame's presence, in the same octagonal room where we have previously seen her.

Madame wore the purple brocade, the time-dimmed lace, which had been resurrected from winding shrouds of yellowed linen and the funeral depths of cedar chests; the gold and the brilliant which had been brought to light for the first time in years in honor of Madame's newest whim.

She was seated in an arm-chair, which for ungainliness and discomfort was a fair type of the furniture in vogue three generations back. The faded brocade, and quaint carving of its design, were concealed by a cloth of striped purple and gold, finished at the edges by a fringe of gold bullion, which had been thrown completely over it. The gorgeousness of effect was heightened by the immense proportions of the chair, rendering a footstool indispensable. Altogether, it would require no extravagant flight of fancy to imagine Madame a queen enthroned.

She rose as they entered, descending nimbly from her elevated station, and clasping her wrinkled, jeweled hands over the top of her ebony stick, she stood silently regarding them.

The erect little figure in its old-style dress, with head turned to one side, and bright black eyes peering at them with a glance bird-like in its unwavering intensity, presented a picture far as possible from the expectations of the two young girls. In the mental speculations they had indulged regarding the manse and its mistress, each had unconsciously imagined a stately, dignified

dame, a little stern in demeanor and inclined to appear graciously condescending to the new dependants.

The disparity between the vision and the reality disconcerted them for a moment.

"Young ladies—well, young ladies!" spoke Madame's sharp, quick tones.

"Where did you take your lessons in civility and etiquette? What do you take me to be—a gnome, or a dragoness, or a creature of ordinary flesh and blood?" Mr. Thancroft, in my day the ceremony of introduction was not considered dispensable between parties for the first time met."

Mr. Thancroft apologized, and presented the young ladies in due form as Fay St. Orme and Mirabel Durand.

"Fay? Bah! A babyfied name, but it matches your face," said Madame, to the former. "And you"—turning to the other girl—"you are a Durand. You should be proud as Lucifer, passionate, inconsiderate, foolhardy, and daring, to do justice to your descent. There! I see—I see! You carry evidence of your extraction in your face. The Durand pride is flaming there now, and you bear yourself haughtily as though you never toiled fourteen hours in the day as nursery-governess to a pork-merchant's children. It wasn't pleasant, was it, for you, gently born and gingerly reared, though knowing enough of poverty always, to earn your meager bit and sup by suppressing your own inclinations to suit their vulgar exactions?"

"It was intolerable, Madame," replied the girl, briefly.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Madame, as though infinitely amused. "And you hoped to better yourself by throwing up the situation and going as subordinate teacher into a day school. Your pride rebelled there again when the principal made love to you, though receiving no more encouragement than a disdainful princess would accord to a presuming subject. Unhappily, there was a fussy Miss Jones who coveted both your truly enviable position in the school and the attentions of the principal. She succeeded in supplanting you."

"I should have resigned at the end of the term had she not done so. I was bound in all honor to stay so long."

"Honor?" cried Madame Durand, jibingly. "Oh, exacting Honor! what crosses it lay upon you. And the Durands are always honorable!"

"Madame!" interrupted Mirabel Durand, with an angry sparkle in her eyes.

"No imputations against your own motives, young lady; but my seventy years may comprise truer knowledge of these Durands than your single score. You left the school. You fell back upon that general resource—that miserable slavery which educated women fly to when left to their own efforts. You gave music lessons, trading your rounds as regularly and almost as often as the postman himself."

"But persecution had not tired of you yet. You won another admirer, a married man this time, and one as much worse than your pedagogue as the venomous centipede is worse than the repulsive but harmless worm. You fled away from him, fearing the breath of slander which might sully a character pure as spotless snow."

"Madame!" interrupted the girl again, with burning cheeks and flashing eyes.

"It is my misfortune to be poor. If poverty has subjected me to such humiliating trials, at least it has never degraded me. It was at your bidding, and not of my seeking, that I am here. I will not endure the insult of the taunts you heap upon me for all the favor you can show, Madame Durand."

"Yet my favor may be well worth keeping," said Madame, dryly. "I like you, Mirabel Durand, and I admire the spirit you have displayed. There are plenty that would go far to win that much appreciation from me."

Mirabel Durand shot a half-defiant glance at the imperious old woman, but she had wheeled about to face the other young girl, who, with the lawyer, had been a silent witness of the scene.

"You, Fay St. Orme—a ridiculous name—you come of the blood with as straight a lineage as she. Let me see; your father was some cavalry officer."

"Colonel St. Orme."

"By brevet; I remember. Unfortunately that he should have died of a vulgar malaria instead of meeting death gloriously on the battle-field. There, I've no reminiscences regarding you. What have you done all your life?"

"I remained at school until a year ago. Since that I have been with mamma at uncle St. Orme's."

"Humph," said Madame, peering at her in her odd, bird-like fashion. "You have all the modern accomplishments, I suppose. You can dance and play, paint, draw, make feather flowers, and work Chinese puzzles in silk floss? That about comprises a fashionable education, doesn't it?"

Fay, scarcely knowing how to take the madame's admitted that she knew something of these accomplishments.

"And you can flirt, too—dance on men's hearts, nowadays, have plenty of elastic qualities. You're not hard to read, Miss Fay St. Orme. You are shallow and selfish; good-natured, I hope; vain, I know. They are not cardinal sins, and I've a word of warning for you. I'll not have you flirting here, at the manse. I'll not be troubled having the young jackdaws of the neighborhood flocking here, and I'll see if those wonderful attainments of yours can be put to any account."

"Mr. Thancroft, you'll stay to dinner to oblige me. You, young ladies, can retire for a time. We dine precisely at six, and I have a decided aversion to be kept waiting. Milly, Milly Ross—here!"

Madame rapped sharply on the black marble hearth with her ebony stick. The door opened almost instantly, and a quaint figure appeared on the threshold. So small, that at the first glance it seemed the figure of a child; the short, scant skirt exposing a pair of small prim feet made the stature appear even less than it really was. The face was older, belonging to twenty years or more, and was oddly striking in its quiet contour. The skin was transparent and colorless, the lips thin and pale, the eyes of that light-blue which reminds one of the thinnest of well-skimmed milk, the hair of a neutral tint, very fine, and arranged in the smoothest of tiny close braids, matched by the knot of gray ribbon with which they were tied.

"Show the young ladies to their rooms, Milly, and wait upon them, if they require it."

Madame waved them away, and turned her attention to Mr. Thancroft. She perfectly understood the stiff constraint he had imposed upon himself, but having carried her point, she was sublimely indifferent to the evident dissatisfaction of her friend and adviser.

"Now, how go your own affairs, Mr. Thancroft? How does our young student progress, and will his acumen serve to grace the profession under your admirable teaching and example?"

"The young man is naturally quick enough, but I doubt if he will ever make a good lawyer. He is too indolent to accomplish any thing, with too little application to carry him straight through the simplest tasks. We passed him with a fishing-rod in his hands just beyond the village, and I'm sure North has need of his assistance in the office. I wouldn't undertake such a charge except to favor you, Madame."

Madame laughed.

"Young and heedless, he will come out of it," said she, lightly. "Think of the charge I have undertaken—two flighty young creatures instead of one!"

"Hope you may get a benefit of them too," grumbled the lawyer, to himself.

"What's that you say?" queried Madame, sharply.

"I hope they may appreciate your beneficent intentions, Madame."

"Don't attempt a compliment, Mr. Thancroft. It only comes from your lips, for you know, as well as I, that there's no beneficence about it. It is simply my pleasure to take them into charge without any care for them or their welfare. Now, honestly, what particular good is there in gratifying myself?"

"None whatever, Madame," retorted the lawyer, brusquely, "so long as you forget duty in doing it."

"How accommodating you are, and how you misuse me, my good friend," cried Madame, briskly. "What a simplicity of candor, what a disregard of personal interest! Such open independence is refreshing in our day, and for one of your profession. Would it make any difference, I wonder, if I withdrew my business because of your plain speaking?"

"On my soul, I wish you would," said the lawyer, hotly. "It's not so easy, Madame, playing cat's-paw to a perverse woman."

"Does the pay for it burn your fingers, honest man?" queried Madame, provokingly. "Fairview would thrive you without the Durand charges, would it not? There, you're sorry, I see. Don't apologize. You would not have been so rash, but you know I do not resent your officiousness."

"Be reconciled, Mr. Thancroft. I have ordered stuffed goose for dinner in consultation of your taste. The steps were broad, and they ascended only to the first landing, but Fay St. Orme looked back into the vault-like shadows lying beneath with a visible shudder."

"Ugh, what a horrid old place!" she exclaimed. "I shall expect nothing better than to break my neck in that dark pit one of these days. What could the builder have meant by setting such a man-trap, I wonder? Isn't there any other way of going up and down, you—Milly?" That's what Madame called you, I think."

"There's the servants' stairway at the back," answered Milly, slowly. "I don't think Madame would like you to use that."

"I don't think I should like it myself," said Fay, with a toss of her head.

"You will soon grow accustomed to this one, Miss St. Orme," said Mirabel Durand. "It is the strangeness of it impresses you now; there can be no actual danger with these solid balustrades."

"This way, if you please," said Milly Ross, leading on again.

She threw open the door of a moderate-sized room, having an outlook toward the orchards and deepening wood which skirted the south side of the narrow lawn.

"This is your sitting-room, meant for the use of both," she explained, and throwing open a second door—"this one is the dressing-room; the bedchambers are separate, but both open into this. The one to the right for Miss Durand, the other for Miss St. Orme."

The bedrooms were tiny apartments almost filled by huge old-fashioned bedsteads, chair and washstand. Fay glanced discontentedly at the great four-posters with canopies of dingy damask, and only a square of druggery covering the center of the floor.

"I had a French bed at uncle St. Orme's," she said, poutingly, "with cashmere counterpanes and real lace-ruffled pillows. Our dormitory at school was better furnished than these rooms."

"Madame has left the rooms exactly as they were when she first married," said Ross. "Only some of them were newly-furnished then, I believe. Madame is very fond of the old things."

"I don't admire her taste then," declared Fay. "If I were mistress here I'd make a bonfire of the old rubbish."

"Better not tell the madame that," remarked Milly, dryly.

"I don't propose spoiling my chance of figuring in Madame's will, if that is what you mean. But the place is detestable for all that."

"It is quaint and old-styled to a degree," said Mirabel. "I like the solid masonry and the queer corners."

"It's like one of the haunted houses one finds in old story-books. I'm just unromantic enough to prefer modern elegance to remote antiquities. I hope Madame is amenable to sweet persuasion, there's such lots of things I'll want to make life endurable here."

"I wonder that you should come at all when it was so much nicer at your uncle's," said Milly Ross, pertly.

"I wouldn't throw away the chance of one day becoming the Durand heiress," said Fay, with an air of charming naïveté.

"That is, if Miss Durand don't forestall me in the madame's favor. You see, I happen to know that she means to pitch upon one of us two. It's not time to dress yet, is it?"

"Not yet. I'll come back in half an hour to unpack for you."

So saying, Milly Ross led the way back to the sitting-room, and left the girls there together.

It was furnished in the same solid, dingy

style which marked every portion of the manse. There were great round-backed chairs of heavy oak, grooved and beveled. There was a square table with a squat center-standard and sprawling claw feet. The carpet was green, faded almost to a yellow tint, and there were green blinds with a border of gaudy, painted flowers, at the windows. A high mantel had the space beneath filled with fragrant spruce-pine boughs. Heavy carved brackets were placed here and there against the walls. One held a curious marble vase with a growing, fine-leaved vine drooping its tangled tendrils over the edge.

"Madame must possess a refined taste," said Mirabel. "Nothing indicates it more truly than a passion for beautiful flowers."

Fay shrugged her graceful shoulders.

"I don't care a whit for Madame's flowers," said she, "but I know that her jewels are magnificent. Those brilliants!—how they sparkled on her shivered hands. How would I look in the family diamonds, I wonder?"

"Very pretty, I think," said her companion, coldly. Miss Durand had not taken particularly to this fair connection whom she met for the first time upon that day when their routes had joined on their journey to the manse.

"Pretty?" echoed Fay. "I would be dazzling, bewildering! You see, I am perfectly well aware of my own beauty. Miss Durand, and because you are a beauty too it need not make us bad friends. I wish you'd sit in that stiff chair and let me take the stool at your feet. I want to get acquainted with you."

Mirabel seated herself, while Fay's tongue rattled on unceasingly.

"We are both beauties, but there's no reason why we should be rivals on that account. We are not in the least alike. You are on the stately, grand order, and are perfect as a brunoise, can't I imagine how those great black eyes of yours can flash out scorn and defiance, or melt with tenderness. The art of coquetry ought to come natural to you, *ma chérie*."

"I have had little opportunity to cultivate it were I so inclined," said Mirabel, amused at her companion's assurance of speech.

"I should think so, if Madame got your history correct. Why, in your place, I should have flirted desperately with those importunate lovers."

"You will need to be reminded of Madame's warning, I'm afraid."

"Oh, I can be circumspect, too. But you've made me forget my thread of discourse. I was saying that you are dark and queenly, and all that, while I'm fair and petite, and look innocent enough to be free of all guile. I'm so transparent that I'm telling you that because I know that you would find me out all the same. Now I want you to be very gentle with me, Mirabel Durand; I never want you to be cross or haughty with me, as I know it is in your nature to be. I always go into hysterics when people are unkind to me."

Mirabel laughed.

"I suspect you of being a little hypocrite," said she. "But I have a horror of hysteria, and will try to avoid afflicting you."

"You dear creature!" cried Fay, gushing; "but just where the conference was broken by the entrance of Milly Ross, ready to assist them in unpacking."

(To be Continued.)

THE RED SCORPION: OR, THE BEAUTIFUL PHANTOM.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR., AUTHOR OF "FLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK CRESCENT," "HOODWINKED," "HERCULES, THE HUNCHBACK," "PEARL OF PEARS," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V. GIMP'S QUEST.

THADDEUS GIMP, LL. D., sat in his office, unmindful of the night which was closing around him.

The lawyer was absorbed in reverie; his blue eyes were riveted on one spot upon the carpet, as if the figure he saw there was an essential to his thoughts.

"Ah, yes, yes; Thad Gimp, if you're only right in your surmises, now—if there only is something in your conclusions—then your fortune is made. I shan't sleep a wink this night—not a wink—I'm so anxious to hear from Storms. I'll see him the first thing in the morning, the very first thing, and—"

"Here's a note for you, sir." The office-boy broke in upon his musings.

"Well," he snapped, "let me have it."

Gimp started when he saw the direction upon the envelope. It was a familiar hand. "Oscar Storms," he exclaimed, rather excitedly. "What's this, eh?"

Hastening to the window, through which the last faint glimmer of the day afforded just light sufficient to read by, he tore open the missive.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Is there to be an answer?" this to the boy, who lingered in the room.

"No, sir; but—"

"But what—hey?"

"Mayn't I go home now, sir?"

"Yes, go. Get out."

Thaddeus Gimp was somewhat nervous, with a mingled feeling of expectation and suspense. He lost no time in perusing the contents of the note, which ran as follows:

"If you have a few moments to spare, come to me at once. I have something important to communicate."

Storms also was in an uneven frame of mind. Gimp instantly perceived this, and his own excitement grew more marked.

"Yes, Mr. Gimp, I went to Birdwood."

"Yes, yes—and you saw Kurtz?" fingering the handle of his cane and fidgeting uneasily.

"I saw him."

"Yes, yes—and you did as I told you?"

"Exactly."

"Yes—and the effect, Mr. Storms?—the effect?"

"That is what I wished to see you about. Won't you sit down?"

"No, no; never mind. Quick, tell me the effect of your words on Karl Kurtz."

"He looked at me as though I had struck him a blow in the face, and then sunk down."

"Fainted?"

"Yes."

"He did?—he did?" The lawyer fairly squealed the words; then he began rubbing his hands together in a delighted way, and asked:

"Then what, Mr. Storms?—then what? What after that?"

"I left the house, and returned to the city. To tell the truth, I feel worried at what I have done."

"Worried? Nonsense! It's all right; it's excellent, oh, wonderfully excellent! You—"

"Explain yourself, Mr. Gimp; you puzzle me." The young man could not help remarking the extraordinary jubilation of his companion.

"Nothing; nothing much, that is, my dear sir. Only I'm a made man from this day. So are you. You'll win Lorilyn St. Clair, undoubtedly. Oh! most excellent!"

"Mr. Gimp, what means all this?"

"Don't I tell you it means nothing? But, stick to your ground, Storms—stick! Follow up what you've commenced. See Kurtz again to-morrow. Push things. Lorilyn St. Clair is yours. I already see you at the altar with her at your side. And I'm a made man—I am! Now, I'm off. I'm going to Birdwood," and he darted toward the door, with an activity foreign to his corpulence, while he chuckled until his fat body shook like so much jelly.

"Is the man crazy?" Storms asked himself, as he listened to the patter of the lawyer's feet on the stairs.

Lawyer Gimp, half an hour later, was speeding over the road that led to Birdwood.

"I'm made!" he would exclaim, every once in a while. "Yes, I'm made! All through being shrewd, wide awake, on the look-out! Ha! ha! made!"

With a used-up horse and a dirty buggy, Thaddeus Gimp drew up before the mansion of Karl Kurtz, and, calling the stable to take charge of his animal, he ascended the steps.

Two forms, sitting in large arm-chairs on the piazza, attracted his attention.

"There's the couple I saw at the *Red Ox*," he muttered, as he entered the house.

"The one who has given me my cue—the other in tight clothes, who carries that box all the time. Now, I wonder what's in that box? I'll know before the night is over, or my name isn't Thad Gimp! Ho, there, fellow! Is Mr. Kurtz at home?"

"He is, sir," replied the servant addressed.

"Tell him, Thaddeus Gimp, lawyer and solicitor, wants to see him. Hurry," and he turned into the side-parlor, with a swagger and a flourish of his cane.

CHAPTER VI.

THE AVENGER'S TERMS.

A SLEEPLESS night was that passed by Karl Kurtz after bidding his guests adieu when the clock struck one.

Dark memories preyed upon him; his brain fevered in a recollection of some dread crime which cast a shadow over his early life, and now revived in a painful, haunting vision, with the coming of Vincent Carew.

From side to side across his pillow, he tossed and shifted; in vain he strove to shut out the harassing something conjured by his thoughts; at times a faint ejaculation from his pale lips told of an agony which racked his mind, rioting in his heart.

He did not descend at the call of the breakfast-bell.

Vincent Carew, rising at a late hour, inquired after the owner of Birdwood.

"He's indisposed, sir," was the reply to his question.

He and Dyke went out upon the piazza.

Many were the curious glances bestowed upon the pair by the numerous household servants.

As the two sat alone, Carew's gaze wandered over the broad lands which surrounded the mansion, and a gleam that was strange and foreboding brightened his small, snaky eyes, as he took in the many acres with their wealth of ripening grain, the orchards, the vineries, the beautiful groves whose scented shadows vied with the blendings on Egean shores; the smooth, velvety lawn, with its bordered seats; the neatly-rolled paths that wound like brown serpents through the blooming shrubbery; the fountain spraying its waters in brilliant rainbows, while the immense basin—a miniature *Notte Gill*—rippled with the sport of innumerable fish dancing their supple bodies here and there, as they reveled in the sunbeams.

"A fine place to own, eh, Dyke?"

"Yes, master," answered Dyke, who had been watching him closely.

Just then a servant passed them, coming from the stable, where he had gone to order out the carriage for Mrs. Kurtz and Lorilyn.

Carew detained him to ask:

"Has Mr. Kurtz come down yet?"

"Yes, sir; he's in the parlor now."

"I thought I heard a step in the entry. Come, Dyke, we'll see him."

They proceeded to the parlor.

Kurtz was sitting at a window, looking out. The breeze fanned back the short gray locks from his forehead, showing the latter dry and cold in a deathly paleness. He drummed nervously upon the sill—did not hear them as they approached.

"Good-morning, Mr. Kurtz," a touch of sarcasm on the name.

He turned quickly; a shiver convulsed him when he saw who it was.

"Good-morning." The voice that replied to Carew's salutation was hollow and unnatural.

"Business, if you please, Mr. Kurtz," he advanced to the old gentleman's side, while Dyke Rouel stood aloof, watching and listening intently.

"Business?"

"You are forgetful—purposely, I venture. Our interview was out short last night; now we'll resume. Do you intend to stand by your agreement with Antoine Martinet?"

"Yes."

"Where is she? Is she in your house?"

"You have seen her?"

"Seen her? When?"

"A few moments ago, down—"

"Was it she who came to the parlor door?"

"Yes."

"Curse Antoine Martinet!" muttered Kurtz, between his teeth.

"He served you well, once."

"No, he served me ill. Had I never met with him I would not now be what I am—shrinking before my own conscience."

"Your conscience has been well smothered for a number of years. But that's neither here nor there. I have come to keep the pledge—ay, the oath—I gave Antoine Martinet."

"Man, have you no pity in you?" Kurtz faced him suddenly, and something like the old fire seemed to rekindle in his nature.

"None," returned his sinister tormentor; and he added: "So be careful how you brave my power. If you ever again lay your hand on a pistol—"

"Ha!"

"Ay, you did it last night in the library—repeat the action, I say, and I'll set the law bounds on your heels!"

"We are going out for a drive, uncle; will you accompany us?" Lorilyn, attired for a ride, stood in the doorway.

No sooner did Vincent Carew set eyes on the lovely girl, than he clapped his hands to his brow and staggered backward. A choked exclamation fell from his lips; he waved one hand before him, as if he would banish her from his sight.

"The Phantom! The Phantom!" he gasped.

"Master, master, keep your feet!" cried Dyke, springing forward.

When Carew looked up and stared wildly toward the door, Lorilyn was gone.

She was strangely agitated as she hastened out to the waiting carriage. As she sunk into the luxurious cushions beside her aunt, she whispered to herself in a frightened way:

"The Phantom," he said! Oh, God! what can he have meant? None but those with the blood of Carew in their veins ever see it—can it be—the sentence was not completed; she shuddered and glanced fearfully back at the parlor-windows as the carriage moved away.

"What's the matter, dear?" asked Mrs. Kurtz, noticing her paleness.

"Nothing, nothing, aunt; the heat affects me."

Karl Kurtz looked in utter astonishment on the scene enacted.

"Come," said Carew, his brows knitting in an evil scowl. "We'll have no more nonsense! I've wasted time enough."

"Wait, wait," interrupted Kurtz; "not here; let us go to the library."

"Lead on, then."

When they reached the library, Carew said:

"Now, Mark Drael, did you look at the paper I dropped on the floor, and which you picked up?"

"No," stammering.

"Do so now." The tone was one of command. The man who held Karl Kurtz so mysteriously in his power was evidently resolved to brook no further dally in attending to that which had brought him to Birdwood.

Trembling, breathing hard, avoiding the burning, malicious gaze that was fixed upon him, Kurtz drew the paper from his pocket.

"Read it aloud."

"Aloud?"

"You heard me," and the sullen, threatening expression grew darker.

"No—at least, spare me that! It is trial enough to—"

"I tell you to read that paper aloud!" thundered Carew, clenching his fist.

"I will—I will."

Karl Kurtz shivered as with an ague when he opened the paper and fastened his eyes on the writing it contained. He faltered, hesitated, seemed incapable of speech.

"Go on."

Slowly, and in broken syllables, he began:

"Know, by this, that I, Mark Drael, am ready, at the order of Antoine Martinet, to fulfill the contract made with him—let that order come when it will; nor will I deny the claims of that contract, but cancel them at once, so help me God!"

"There is more. Read on."

"Let presentation of this be the order. The time has come!"

"And the signature to this? Answer me."

"Is that of Antoine Martinet?"

"And the one above it?"

"Mark Drael."

"But whose is it?"

"Mine—I—mine!" groaned the miserable man, and, letting the paper fall from his nerveless fingers, he sunk forward, resting his cold, sweat-bathed forehead in his hands.

"You see I am well armed. You remember the contract?"

"Yes."

Kurtz looked up at him beseechingly.

"So! Now then, my demand: you will go to the city to-morrow, and legally transfer Birdwood to me—hold! that is not all. Besides, you will place fifty thousand dollars to my credit in bank. You can afford it."

Karl Kurtz stared at him like one struck with a soul-deep terror. What more would be demanded of him?

"You see I am lenient. I don't want all of your money, though I could take it. Now, the third, and last: you have a niece—Antoine Martinet says you became her guardian, at the death of her mother, when she was but six years old—"

"Well—what of her?" in a scarce audible voice.

"You will prepare her to receive me as her future husband—her name is Lorilyn St. Clair, is it not?"

"You—you—wed—Lorilyn?"

"That is my intention. And, mark: I want no trouble about it. You may arrange the best way you can. Will you obey, Mark Drael?" a latent menace in the closing inquiry.

"Man, don't do this! Don't force Lorilyn to wed you! You are wicked, ay, *vile*; there is nothing fiendish that you would hesitate to perpetrate—I read it in your face! Such a thing would be a most unholy sacrifice!"

"Have a care, Mark Drael!"

Dyke Rouel, standing behind Carew, was making signs of warning. But Kurtz heeded him not.

"I care no longer for myself; you have me beneath your heel, to trample on and grind down at will. I yield because I can not help it. But spare her—"

"Where is she? Is she in your house?"

"You have seen her?"

"Seen her? When?"

"A few moments ago, down—"

"Was it she who came to the parlor door?"

"Yes."

For a few seconds the dark-browed man gazed fixedly at him. During that space some secret emotion agitated him.

"Mark Drael, we understand each other. Refuse, at your peril, to obey my orders."

He turned abruptly on his heel and left the library, motioning Dyke to follow.

As Rouel passed out, he made another warning sign. The expression of his sickly countenance said, plainly:

"Beware! I have warned you not to trifle with him."

Karl Kurtz sat in solitude, the threatening words of his foe—it was a foe, and a dreaded one—ringing in his ears.

"How singular!" thought Carew, as he walked slowly along the entry. "This Lorilyn St. Clair—she—By Heaven! hers is the face of the Phantom that pursues me. What can it mean? No matter; I'll think upon it some other time—Ah!" he stopped short as he saw Eddy ascending the stairs with his nurse.

"You'll have to sleep two hours to-day, child; the party robbed you of your nap yesterday." It was the nurse speaking. She addressed the golden-haired boy in a playful tone, and patted him on the shoulder.

Eddy replied with a light, silvery laugh, and the two disappeared.

"So he goes to take his regular morning nap," mused Carew. "What better time than now to secure the revenge Antoine Martinet swore to have, and bade me attend to as the price of my fortune?"

In the shadows of the entry Vincent Carew awaited the return of the nurse. He felt sure she would come down after seeing Eddy asleep.

The library door opened, and Karl Kurtz came out. But he descended by another stairway.

Carew was right in his supposition. The nurse returned very soon.

"Give me the box, Dyke."

"Yes, master. But, I say—what are you going to do?"

"Silence! Don't ever ask me such a thing as that again, Dyke Rouel, unless you relish kicking."

Dyke bowed meekly.

"Now, go down to the piazza and wait there for me. If I am asked after, remember: you don't know where I am."

"Yes, master."

With the mysterious box in hand, Carew glided away on tip-toe.

"It was a strange, strange look that settled on Dyke Rouel's face when he watched the retreating figure of the man whom he called 'master.'"

"Some day!" he muttered, in a measured voice. "Some day!"

Then he went down to the piazza.

Rouel's shoes were without heels; the soles were thin and pliant; hence his step was noiseless as the tread of a cat. It was owing to this fact that he heard some one say, as he passed the parlor door:

"No, it must not be! I love Lorilyn too well. I'll go to the city to-night and—"

The speaker lowered his voice, so that Rouel could hear no more.

"It's Mark Drael!" said Dyke, *sotto voce*, as he dropped into one of the cane chairs on the piazza, and coiled arms and limbs around it until he appeared to tie himself in a knot.

"Perhaps, friend Mark, our cause may become common shortly. If I only wasn't such a coward, I'd long ago—"

He paused as Kurtz came out of the house and walked, with unsteady step, along one of the gravelled paths.

The dark, rolling eyes gazed after him, while their owner seemed wrapt in deep meditation.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SMALL BOX STRIKE.

Eddy Kurtz was sleeping peacefully on his downy bed.

The nurse had not been detained long with him; a child is quickly wrapt in the embrace of slumber when the young head settles comfortably on the pillow. Worries and cares like those which weave unrest in the minds of men, exert no such influence on the brain of youth.

Calmly he slept on, unconscious of the black shadow that was closing around him. A bearded face was thrust in at the door; a pair of murderous eyes were fixed upon the sleeper; then, noiseless as a flitting specter, Vincent Carew entered.

The expression of his countenance was diabolical as he paused at the bedside and silently contemplated the boyish form.

"And now I'll pay the price of my fortune!" he muttered, in a voice that issued between his lips like a snake's hiss. "Now Antoine Martinet will have his revenge! It's almost a pity to strike at the life of this helpless boy—but, it's the price! I swore to do it! Look down, Antoine Martinet; see what I am doing."

He turned the box over in his hand until he found a small slip. This he pushed up and a hole, not more than a quarter of an inch in diameter, was revealed.

Next, he took out his penknife, and with the sharp blade drew a single drop of blood from his finger-tip. This blood he carefully touched to the white arm of the boy, directly over one of the large blue veins.

A moment more, and he had placed the hole in the box completely over the mark—then stood, like a foul demon, watching his victim.

Something moved within the box. A sliding, slipping, crawling sound was heard. "It scents the blood! It will try to eat, when, enraged at failure, the deadly tail will strike its venom into the blood!" As this boy dies, so died the rival of Mark Drael, at the hands of Antoine Martinet. Ah!

There was a sudden recoil of the thing within the box. Eddy started and shifted his position, but did not awake.

Carew withdrew the box and shut the slide.

"It's done!" He bent forward to look at the spot whereon he had placed the drops of blood.

The skin was clear and white; but there was a tiny speck visible, no larger than the pricking of a pin would cause.

With the same care he had exercised in entering, he now went out.

From the window at the head of the stairs he saw Karl Kurtz sitting beneath one of the majestic shade trees on the lawn, his head hung dejectedly upon his breast.

Sardonically the smile of Vincent Carew as he continued down the stairs.

When he reached the piazza, where Rouel awaited him, he observed the carriage just entering the broad drive and approaching the house.

Like one riveted, he looked into the beautiful face of Lorilyn St. Clair.

As the ladies alighted and ascended the steps, some irresistible magnetism drew

Lorilyn's gaze to this man—only for a moment, yet a cold, indescribable thrill seized her during that brief exchange of glances.

"Yes, her face is that of the Phantom!" uttered Carew, low and thoughtfully, when she had gone from his sight.

Soon the tinkle of the dinner-bell put an end to the reveries of the crime-stained man.

Kurtz was coming toward him. When the old gentleman reached the piazza, he said, huskily:

"Will you step in to dinner, Vincent Carew?"

"Yes. And—my servant here—where will he take his meals?—with us? Yes. Come, Dyke."

When Vincent Carew was introduced to the ladies, Lorilyn bowed with drooping eyes. For some cause, it chilled her to look at him. And his name?—when she heard it, she turned very pale; and, though to an observer she was calm enough, there was a throbbing of the heart in her bosom, and she sunk mechanically into her seat.

He sat opposite to her. The small gray eyes were constantly wandering to her, and she felt—a disagreeable, trying feeling—the hard, burning, searching gaze of which she was the object.

After the meal, Carew and Rouel returned to their seats on the piazza. The first lit a cigar and settled himself back in the large cane chair to enjoy the fumes.

Lorilyn, in the parlor, with eyes bent vacantly on the page of the novel she had taken up, murmured lowly:

"What—does—it—mean? Oh, Heaven! it can't be! He is too evil-looking to be of kin to me! And yet, he has spoken of the Phantom—his name is Carew! Yes, it must be. Shall I tell him that I believe him to be my—no, no, no! it is impossible!"

It was when Carew had cast his cigar-stump aside, and sat listlessly surveying the distant woodlands, or anon, hearkening to the twitter and hum of bird and insect, that Oscar Storms arrived.

Though he appeared to pay the young man no particular attention, the gray eyes darted a hard scrutiny from beneath the shaggy brows.

A few seconds later, he heard Storms speaking with Lorilyn.

His seat was near to one of the parlor windows; their words were plainly audible to him. He frowned as he caught the tenor of their dialogue.

Presently the voices changed. Lorilyn had left the room. Storms and Kurtz were together.

Vincent Carew arose and stole quietly to the parlor door. It was his shadow Kurtz had seen when conversing with the young man.

The villain wondered greatly when he heard the words of Oscar Storms, relative to Lorilyn.

"A-h!" he exclaimed; "what hold has he on Mark Drael?"

Then came the groan—the sound of a falling body.

He entered hurriedly.

When Oscar Storms went out, involuntarily obeying Carew's suggestion as to his departure, the latter looked darkly after him.

"So, he is her lover? She doesn't seem to think much of him, judging from her caustic remarks just now. He is determined to have her, eh? We'll see. We'll measure our power over Mark Drael, young man—I am going to have Lorilyn St. Clair."

Kurtz slowly recovered his senses. He shuddered as he saw who it was bending over him.

"You fainted, Mark Drael—"

"Hush! In the name of mercy, don't speak that name where another might hear it!"

"Let me assist you to arise."

Regaining his feet, Kurtz asked:

"Where is he?—where is young Storms?"

"Gone."

"Gone?—back to the city?"

"Yes. I ordered him to go. You see, I am already taking some responsibility upon myself here. He certainly must have struck you down. I heard you fall, and immediately hurried in to—"

"If you please, sir—I'm sorry to interrupt you—master Eddy is very sick, sir." At this juncture spoke a servant.

"Sick!" Kurtz looked at him in astonishment.

"Yes, sir. And nurse Emily says it's a high fever. Mrs. Kurtz is with him—and hadn't you better come up, sir?"

Without a word more, he hurried to the room where his child lay.

"Ha! ha! ha!" chuckled Carew. "Sick? Yes, I guess he is, by this time. He'll never get over it either!"

He rejoined Dyke Rouel.

"Come, Dyke, we'll look around. I want to see the whole beauty of the estate that I am soon to own."

"Own, master?" said Rouel, inquiringly, as he followed Carew along one of the paths.

"Yes, 'own.' In twenty-four hours I'll be proprietor here."

Dyke Rouel affected great surprise.

"And," continued the somber-visaged villain, whose habitual sullenness disappeared, for the time, under influence of a talkative mood, "I am soon to wed Lorilyn St. Clair."

"Lorilyn St. Clair?"

"Yes. That lovely girl—or, rather, woman—we saw go out driving this morning. Moreover, Dyke, there'll be \$50,000 to my credit in bank by this time to-morrow."

"\$50,000, master? Goody! that's a heap of money."

"Some people would laugh at the idea of such an amount being a fortune. But, with a good business man, that sum will easily quadruple itself. I flatter myself on the qualification. I can so use the money on this place as to be worth half a million before I die—and, by the way, Dyke, con- sider to serve me faithfully, and I shan't forget you in my will. I could have made this start with a great deal more than \$50,000; but, I'm generous—ha! ha!—very generous!"

The servants, during the afternoon, discovered, in some way, that Dyke Rouel was nothing but a servant; so, at the table, it was with elevated noses and glances of contempt they waited upon him. He wriggled his eyebrows at them with a grimace, however, and unconcernedly went through with the meal.

Lorilyn and Mrs. Kurtz were both absent from table; the first in her room, engaged with strange, worrying thoughts, and the mother at the bedside of her child who had been so suddenly taken ill.

After tea, Vincent Carew went again to the piazza—he seemed to have selected this as his especial retreat—and lighted another cigar.

He had noticed the by-play between his follower and the servants, and when the two were alone, he said:

"Never mind, Dyke, you'll soon be second in authority in this house, and then you can pull those aproned asses by the ears till they beg your pardon."

When Thaddeus Gimp arrived in such hot haste and entered with such pompous bearing, Carew took the cigar from his mouth, and listened. He was anxious to know who the visitor was, and what he wanted.

Kurtz soon came down.

"Ah! Mr. Kurtz, good-evening—hope I see you well? Why! you look to the contrary. Been ill?"

"I am ill now," answered Kurtz, as he withdrew his icy hand from the other's very cordial grip.

"Yes? What's the matter, eh?"

"Oh, nothing; mere indisposition—"

"Ahem! I see—got the blues. We are all subject to them. Have them myself, sometimes. Let me recommend a little whisky 'sang'—abbreviates hypochondria without fail. Family well?"

"All, with the exception of Eddy."

"Ah! he's sick?"

"Very. He was well enough at noon to-day; I cannot account for it. A high fever. He is delicious at this moment. I sent to town for the doctor, just as the servant told me you were here. Did you come to me on any business, Mr. Gimp?—or is it, that I am honored by your usual friendly call?"

It was with apparent difficulty Kurtz kept up this conversation.

"Um! well, yes—business. Fact is, Mr. Kurtz, my profession often turns up queer cases, and—by-the-by—he put the question quick as a lightning dart—'do you know a man named Antoine Martinet?'"

"Antoine Martinet!" like a sharp echo, sounded the repetition which came right upon the lawyer's utterance.

That echo came from the piazza.

Vincent Carew had started to his feet; the cigar fell from his fingers; he listened intently. It was he who gave vent to the exclamation, for the lawyer's mention of Antoine Martinet filled him with a strange anxiety.

"Bless me!" spluttered Gimp, affecting considerable uneasiness. "Did you hear that, Mr. Kurtz? Like a voice from the tomb wasn't it?"

But the lawyer well knew from whose lips the exclamation came. He had spoken the name of Antoine Martinet purposely quite loud.

A dagger-thrust could not have caused Karl Kurtz to recoil more suddenly than did the question put by Thaddeus Gimp.

"What—what do you mean? What of Antoine Martinet?" he cried, gaspingly.

"Excuse me, Kurtz"—Gimp assumed an airy manner—"I don't want to frighten you any more to-night. We can talk it over in the morning."

"It?"

"Didn't I say it?" with a face of extravagant gravity. "Just have me shown to a room, please. I'll see you again in the morning, and explain."

Kurtz pulled the bell-rope.

Thaddeus Gimp was conducted up stairs. But he had no intention of going to bed. The lawyer, when alone, pulled off his boots, lowered the lamp jet, and then stole silently out to the entry.

Near the staircase was a niche, and in its shadow he ensconced himself. He was acting very mysteriously.

Karl Kurtz was pacing to and fro in the parlor.

"What—what can all this fated cluster portend?" he mumbled, brokenly. "Vincent Carew comes, clothed in authority, from Antoine Martinet—Oscar Storms demands Lorilyn, says I must force her to become his wife, and he whispers—Antoine Martinet! Then Thaddeus Gimp asks me if I knew Antoine Martinet! Oh, God! how I am beset. Can man bear up under this? But I go to the city to-night; yes, yes—Vincent Carew shall not have Lorilyn if I have to—"

A deadly gleam fired the weak eyes, and this completed the sentence.

And Vincent Carew, in his room up stairs, was muttering:

"By all the devils of fate! have I then two to measure weapons with? What does that young man know of Mark Drael that he has such a power over him? What does that fat rascal, who came awhile ago, know of Antoine Martinet? Curse them all! I can match them."

Dyke Rouel slept on a small couch at the foot of his master's bed, and beneath the head of this couch was placed the metal box.

Filled with unrest by his perplexing thoughts, Carew's slumber was fitful and uncertain. Once, during the night, he imagined he heard the sound of a cat-like step in the direction of Rouel's bed.

"Dyke?" he called.

"There was no answer; but he heard the deep, regular breathing of a sleeper."

THE WANDERER'S LAMENT.

BY TOM GOULD.

Alone in the world with its sadness,
To battle its griefs and its strife;
How often I pray for some gladness
To dawn on the shadow of life.
A waif in this wide world so lonely,
Adrift from the pure and the bright;
What might a girl do if she only
Had some one to set her right!

No father, no mother, no brother!
No sister's affectionate care;
And cold are the hearts of all other—
For plenty, but nothing to spare.
No hovel nor home or so dreary—
Is it wicked to wish I were dead?
No mother's caress when I'm weary,
No rest for my poor drooping head.
No friend in this wide world to guide me,
No kind heart to show me the light,
No loved one to praise nor to chide me,
I've no one to set me right!

The strong are so bold and so fearless,
They heed not how others may live;
The rich are so cold and so cheerless,
They think they have nothing to give.
But yet if I fall they will chide me,
Those tongues that refused me would mourn.
The hand that ne'er offered to guide me,
Would point me the finger of scorn.

Oh, charity, art thou forgotten?
And man, art thou idle with life?
Was Jesus so meekly begotten,
That you can not follow his way?
Did Heaven this spirit bequeath you
To shadow all duty from sight?
Or, is it a task quite beneath you
To set a poor creature aright?

The Wronged Heiress:
OR,
The Vultures of New York.

A WEIRD ROMANCE OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS.

BY RETT WINWOOD,
AUTHOR OF "THE WHITE SPECTER," "WHO WAS
SHE?" "BAPTIST: OR, THE DRENNAN PROPHECY,"
"THE DANGEROUS WOMAN,"
"TWO LOVES," "MIRIAM REE-
VORST'S SECRET," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BOLD, BAD WOMAN.

It is now necessary that we go back to the morning subsequent to Mabel Trevor's forced departure from the boat-house at Woodlawn, where she had been detained a prisoner by the orders of Mrs. Laundersdale.

On this particular morning, the hour was very late when Mrs. Laundersdale quitted her suite of private apartments and descended to the breakfast-room.

She could scarcely have rested well, for her face was nearly colorless, and dark circles could plainly be discerned underneath her eyes.

She ate her breakfast in silence. Jane Burt entered the room just as she was rising from the table. Mrs. Laundersdale knitted her brow in perplexed thought, for a minute or two, but presently said:

"Jane, where is your master?"
"He went to the city, some hours since, madam," replied the very demure maid.
"And Marcia?"
"Has gone for her morning walk."

"Good," Mrs. Laundersdale stepped to the library door and threw it open.
"Jane," she said, then, looking back, "send Bill Cuppings to me."

"Ah-ha!"
A sort of double exclamation, but these two words, coming from Jane, meant volumes. She at once departed on her errand, however.

Five minutes later, Bill Cuppings entered the library where Mrs. Laundersdale sat, quietly awaiting his coming.

She acknowledged his entrance by a half-nod. "Pray be seated," she said, pointing to a chair near her own.

A smile of peculiar meaning curled the villain's thin lips.
"What!" he cried, with a palpable sneer, "may I really venture to sit in your presence, my lady?"
"Of course."

"Somebody might come upon us unexpectedly."

"Bah!"
"In which event it would be considered very strange that a servant should be closeted with his mistress in confidential talk," went on Bill, that disagreeable sneer still curling his lip.

"The coast is clear," said Mrs. Laundersdale, angrily. "I am not the woman to run risks without first weighing the consequences."

"True, true," said the exasperating rogue.

He sat down, and looked sharply at his mistress. He had a secret to keep now, and any weakness on his part would surely betray this fact to the sharp-sighted woman before him. If he feigned to be studying her face, she would be less apt to notice his.

There was a short silence. Mrs. Laundersdale waited for him to take the initiative, which he was determined not to do.

"Well?" she said, at last, in an impatient tone.

He drew his chair somewhat nearer. "I suppose you are anxious to learn the result of the little episode that occurred last night," he ventured.

"Yes. Speak quickly. Where is the girl?"
"Can't you guess?"

The guilty woman turned deadly pale. "No, no!" she cried. "You must tell me in so many words what you and Miles did with her."

"She is dead."

He uttered the lie in a perfectly composed tone of voice. His gaze never once wandered from the ghastly countenance of his mistress. Mrs. Laundersdale had not the faintest suspicion that he had broken faith with her.

A slight cry escaped her lips; but it was a cry of relief. She seemed to see the breakers receding that had threatened to overwhelm and ruin her.

"How did you manage it?" she whispered.

"Easily enough. Miles enticed the girl from the grounds, and we carried her off in a cab we had hired for that purpose."

"What then?"
"He drew his hand significantly across his throat."

"She is taking a pretty long snooze in the North River," he said, brutally.

"Would you like to hear the particulars?"
"Never mind." The wicked woman shuddered in spite of herself. "Now, I suppose, you want the money I promised you?"
"As soon as convenient, my lady."

"You shall have your share of it this very day—after I have found time to visit my banker."

"And Miles?"

"I will see him, and settle with him myself."

"Indeed!" There was an ugly smile on Bill's lips as he rose to go. He would have been told the precise nature of the secret his brother and Mrs. Laundersdale held in common.

"I'll find it out yet," he muttered, as he slowly wended his way toward the servants' hall.

Just at present, however, his chief concern was to prevent the wily woman from discovering how utterly he had deceived her in pretending that he had put Mabel out of the way, in accordance with the full spirit of her instructions.

He hoped to profit, in more ways than one, even yet, by her continued existence.

As for Mrs. Laundersdale herself, she felt no remorse because of the crime that she supposed had been perpetrated. Her only emotions were of relief and satisfaction.

While Mabel lived, the sword of Damocles had hung suspended over her head; and now that sword was removed.

A few minutes after Bill Cuppings had quitted the library, a servant appeared to announce a visitor.

This visitor, to Mrs. Laundersdale's surprise and consternation, proved to be Philip Jocelyn.

At first she was tempted not to see him. But an instant's reflection convinced her that such a movement on her part would be unwise; therefore she ordered the servant to show him in.

He looked pale and haggard, and advancing slowly into the apartment, paused directly before Mrs. Laundersdale with his arms folded upon his breast.

"You told me a falsehood last night," he said, in a low, deep tone of voice.

She looked up at him laughingly. "What do you mean?" she asked.

"There is such a person as Mabel Trevor, and you know it."

She neither moved nor answered.

"She was hidden somewhere in these grounds at the very moment when I stood on yonder terrace inquiring for her," he went on, excitedly. "She was hidden in these grounds, and you knew it."

The well-arched brows of Mrs. Laundersdale became slightly elevated.

"You make very strange accusations, Mr. Jocelyn."

"But true ones," he said, sternly. "I, myself, saw the girl, after I left your side, last night. She was in the hands of two ruffians. They took her away in a close carriage."

"Why should you link me with the doings of two strange men?"

"One of those men was your servant. Both were acting under instructions from you. Of that I am thoroughly convinced."

Had Mrs. Laundersdale reposed a trifle less of confidence in Bill's story, she would have been at her wits' end on hearing these very plain words from Philip Jocelyn.

But feeling assured that Mabel was really out of the way, and could never appear against her in this life, she was only a trifle disconcerted.

"Produce this girl, this Mabel Trevor, and bring her face to face with me," she said, laughingly. "I shall then hope to convince you how utterly and entirely groundless are your suspicions."

"Would that I could produce her," cried Philip.

He suddenly caught her hand, and wrung it violently. "For the love of heaven, listen to me," he exclaimed. "Forego your wicked purpose so far as that innocent girl is concerned. Forego it, and I promise that she shall never trouble you in any manner. All I ask is her life and liberty."

"What do you mean by addressing such words to me?" said Mrs. Laundersdale, in a tone of well-affecting amazement. "You are beside yourself!"

"Yes, I am mad, or nearly so—mad with misery and pain. Mabel may be dead for aught I know. She is certainly in great peril. The uncertainty of her fate drives me desperate."

The wicked woman eyed him coolly.

"Why didn't you follow the carriage in which, as you say, the girl was driven away?" she asked.

"I did follow it for some distance. But I was on foot, and it soon left me far behind. I have hunted all night, but vainly. As a last resort, I came back to Woodlawn, hoping to move your stubborn heart to sympathy—hoping that you might be persuaded to give up your fell purpose, and help me to find Mabel."

"Then you believe that impostor's story?"
"Fully."

Mrs. Laundersdale bit her lip, but said nothing. She knew it would be useless to argue with him in his present state of mind.

"I might have had my doubts last night," he added, speaking still in a low, decided voice. "But the last one was removed by what I saw after leaving your side. I am now convinced that Mabel told me the truth."

The wily Jezebel heaved a deep sigh.

"I am sorry, very sorry, that you should think so ill of me, as you must think, if you give credence to that girl's story," she said. "But I will not quarrel with you. By-and-by you will be convinced of your mistake, and feel sorry for the rash words you have addressed to me this morning."

"Till then it is better that we see very little of each other. Let us part friends, however."

She held out her hand with such a sweet, half-regretful smile, that Philip, for his life, could not help taking it in his own.

"Then you will not help me?" he said.
"How can I?" she sighed.

He turned at that, and reluctantly quitted the room.

In crossing the hall he encountered Chloe, a colored servant, who, he had heard, had been for many years in Jasper Laundersdale's employ. Despite the agitated state of his mind, it suddenly occurred to him that he might, perhaps, learn from this old woman the real cause of Mrs. Laundersdale's hatred of Mabel Trevor.

That hatred was certainly to be accounted for by something that had occurred years and years ago, and Chloe might, inadvertently, inform him what that "something" was, or, at least, tell him some hint that would be of use to him.

If he knew exactly why the wicked woman disliked and feared Mabel, he would the better be able to tell what she had done with her.

Acting upon this thought, he slipped a gold-piece into Chloe's hand.

"Are you very busy, just now?" he asked.

"Not particular, mas'r," she answered, grinning from ear to ear.

"So much the better. I have a word to say to you in private. Will you follow me down to the garden gate as soon as you can do so, without calling attention to your movements?"

Chloe looked at the gold-piece in her hand, and nodded a willing assent.

Philip hurried down the path, and stood with both elbows leaned upon the garden wall, attempting to arrange his thoughts for the coming interview.

He had not long to wait. In less than five minutes Chloe joined him at the gate.

"Now, mas'r," she began, with a business-like air, the instant she presented herself, "I s'pects you want to pump me. Out wid it," and she confronted him with an evident eagerness to be pumped.

Perhaps the solitary gold-piece looked lonely, and she hoped to gain a companion for it.

Philip did not have many questions to ask, but the few were put with the greatest possible care, and every one was to the point.

What he learned was briefly this: Chloe had, in fact, been Jasper Laundersdale's servant previous to his second marriage.

She remembered her first mistress very well. She had been a "great lady," and everybody had loved her. Jasper had actually idolized her. She had died very suddenly—it was not precisely known of what complaint.

There had been but one child—a daughter scarcely more than two years old. On the very day of the first Mrs. Laundersdale's death the child had strayed away from her nurse, while they were walking in the grounds, and been drowned.

Thus had the husband and father been stricken by a double blow in the selfsame day.

The body of the child had never been recovered.

This was the purport of what Chloe had to tell in reply to Philip's eager questionings.

The young man could not learn that Jasper Laundersdale had even been acquainted with his present wife at the time of the first Mrs. Laundersdale's death.

When he finally turned to go away—after having pressed a second *douceur* upon the nowise unwilling Chloe—the light he had gained was very meager and unsatisfactory indeed.

"It can't be that Mabel is the child that was supposed to be drowned, and Mrs. Laundersdale is cognizant of that fact," he muttered thoughtfully, as he went striding down the lane. "If so, the truth ought to have been discovered long enough since."

Nevertheless, such a supposition explained much that was mysterious, and he could not thrust the idea lightly from his mind.

It strengthened his determination to bend every energy to the task of discovering what had become of the missing girl.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FOWLER'S SNARE.

Now, simply premising that Philip had gone on with his search for Mabel, though without finding a single clue to guide him, we will take up our narrative at the point where it was dropped in the last chapter but one.

A gleam of light had flashed upon Mabel while she stood at the top of the ruinous flight of stairs, seeking to make her escape from Het Bender's clutches.

A door had suddenly been opened within five or six feet of the spot where she stood. Mabel's feet seemed to be rooted to the floor at first. Her blue eyes dilated with terror and despair, and a low cry fell from her lips.

Old Het stood in the doorway, looking upon her with the malignant cunning of a fiend.

"Try'n he! my pretty dove," she chuckled. "Try'n your wings, ch?"

At the sound of that hated voice, Mabel broke the bonds of horror that held her powerless. Shrieking out at the top of her voice, she fled down the staircase into the pitting darkness of the lower hall.

At the same instant, the slipshod servant-girl named Peggy made her appearance.

"Arter her!" screamed Het, pushing the maid toward the stairs. "Don't let the hussy get away!"

Peggy scrambled down to the lower hall. She was familiar with the way, and her heroism was not. Consequently she was soon clasping in her brawny arms the shrinking figure she had found leaning against the wall.

"I've got her, Old Het," she bawled. "I've got her!"

"Hold her fast, then."

Het hobbled down the staircase to the spot where the two stood, chuckling to herself as she went.

"I s'pected what was up," she cried, shaking her fist in Mabel's white face, when she had reached her side. "I missed the key, and have been on the watch for ye. Lucky I did so, now wasn't it?"

The young girl was unable to answer.

"Sulky, eh? I don't wonder. I ain't very pleasant to be stopped when one has set her mind on runnin' away. But it was sort of necessary that we should stop you, my lady. So come along up-stairs and be locked in again. I've lost sleep enough on your 'count a ready'."

Then, as if a sudden suspicion had occurred to her, the female fury seized both Mabel's delicate wrists in one of her huge hands, and bent her ugly, distorted face close to the quivering one of her captive.

"Where did you get the key?" she hissed, sharply. "Who stole it out o' my box for you?"

Mabel did not answer.

"Speak!" screamed the tigress. "Was it Handsome Hal?"

"No," was the faint reply.

"You lie! Who else knew where I kept it? It was Hal; and you've bewitched him with your pink-and-white face. You've made a traitor of him. Don't you think I've seen it all? Oh, you vixen! I wish you'd been dead afore you ever crossed the threshold of this house!"

Her grasp on Mabel's wrist tightened until the latter almost screamed with pain.

"Let me go, for the love of Heaven, let me go!" she moaned. "I tell you it was not Hal who gave me the key."

"Who, then?"
"I will not tell you."

She was determined, on no account, to betray Julia.

Old Het stood panting and bristling for several minutes, apparently undecided what to do. But finally she loosened her grip, and growled out in a savage tone of voice:

"Come, my pretty, and be locked in."

Mabel suffered herself to be led up the

stairs again, between Old Het and Peggy. She was not conducted to the dormitory, however, but pushed into one of the smaller side-chambers.

"Go in there," said the old woman, as she closed the door upon her, "and do your plottin' and plannin' all to yourself. I reckon you'll not get out in a hurry, this time."

The moment she was left alone, Mabel fell to the floor in a half-unconscious state.

The reaction from hope to utter despair had proved too much for her.

The light of a new day was flooding the earth with its radiance when she again awoke to perfect consciousness.

But a few dim rays, however, penetrated to her squalid prison.

Several hours wore on, and nobody came nigh her. She was beginning to feel weak and ill from long fasting, when a key grated in the door-lock, and Julia entered the room, bringing a slice of bread and a cup of tea.

"Hush!" the ballet-girl whispered, seeing that Mabel was about to speak. "Not a word yet."

She carefully closed the door and approached closely to the captive's side.

"Now, you may speak, my friend. But be careful to keep your voice lowered. Tell me how you happened to fail in making your escape last night."

Mabel hurriedly related what had occurred.

"I knew you were discovered and brought back again," Julia said, when the recital was ended, "but I did not know in what manner. And so you think Old Het has no suspicion that I gave you the key by which you let yourself out of the dormitory?"

"I am sure of it."

"So am I, in fact. To be frank, I've been abusing you roundly in her presence. She is convinced that I dislike you as bitterly as she does. Otherwise she would not have given me permission to bring up your breakfast."

The ballet-girl smiled at the thought of her own cleverness in managing Old Het.

"It was very kind of you to come," said Mabel, gently.

"I promised to be your friend, and I'll stick to my promise, let what will come of it. Now tell me as briefly as possible what you intend to do."

"Alas, I can do nothing."

"Have you no friends who will be looking for you?"

"Not one."

The words had scarcely escaped the girl's lips when she thought of Philip. He had seemed to be deeply interested in her welfare. She had no right to doubt the sincerity and strength of his friendship.

"I was wrong," she added, lastly, a burning blush mantling her cheeks. "There is one who, I am satisfied, would spare no effort to effect my release, did he know where to find me."

"Your lover?" said Julia, slyly.

"No, he is not my lover," Mabel replied, blushing more deeply than ever.

"What is his name?"
"Philip Jocelyn."

The face of the ballet-girl brightened with a sudden resolution.

"Tell me where to find him," she cried, "and I will take any message to him that you may see fit to send."

"Alas, I can not."

Julia looked very much surprised. "Does he reside in New York?" she asked, after a minute's thinking.

"He does."

"Then I may succeed in finding him. Meanwhile, have you no other friend upon whom you can rely?"

For manifest reasons, Mabel dared not send her new acquaintance to Woodlawn, since everybody there, save Mr. Laundersdale himself, was opposed to her; so she slowly shook her head.

Julia now turned to go. "I dare not linger a moment longer," she said. "But, don't despair. Something may be done, even yet; and I'll manage to see you again as soon as possible."

With these encouraging words, she went away.

Old Het, meanwhile, was sipping gin and water in the privacy of her own apartment, and busily revolving a scheme that had suggested itself to her fertile brain the day before.

But for this "scheme" I am inclined to think she would have suffered Mabel to escape without attempting interference of any sort, so jealous was she of the influence the lonely but hapless girl was likely to exert upon Handsome Hal.

Even the passion of greed was less strong than the other passion.

But, by carrying out the "scheme" that had suggested itself, she might, at the same time, get rid of her hated rival, and have a terrible revenge upon her for having attracted Hal's admiration.

She hoped, too, to be able to realize a larger sum of money than she was likely to obtain by keeping Mabel a prisoner.

The nature of the "scheme" we will now proceed to unfold.

About two hours after dark, when the ballet-girls had departed for the various theaters where they were employed, Old Het, after having given Peggy special injunctions to keep a close watch upon Mabel, dressed herself with more than usual care, and quitted her room.

Having turned her back on the precincts of Slaughter-house Point, she hailed a passing cab, and proceeded in the direction of upper Broadway.

"I reckon I can afford to treat myself to a ride," she chuckled, on finding herself comfortably seated inside the vehicle.

"For if I don't make money out of this journey, and a good bit, too, my name ain't Het Bender."

And a smile of satisfaction curled her thin lips.

Having arrived in the vicinity of upper Broadway, the woman dismissed the cab, intending to finish her journey on foot.

With the air of a person perfectly familiar with the neighborhood, she directed her steps to a somewhat imposing building, from the windows of which bright lights were flashing.

A servant answered her ring, and she stepped into a richly-furnished hall the instant the door was opened sufficiently wide to admit her.

Two or three doors leading from this hall stood ajar; and the low murmur of voices, mingled with the rattling of dice and jingling of glasses, came distinctly to the old woman's ears from the room beyond.

In brief, she was in what is termed a first-class faro house.

"Your business, madam?" said the servant, politely; in these modern halls it is the custom to be polite to everybody.

"I want to see Gilbert Belmont," she replied, gruffly. "Tell him it's Old Het, and he won't be likely to keep me waitin'. He knows me too well for that."

The servant departed with the message. In less than five minutes thereafter, the tall, handsome figure of Gilbert Belmont was to be seen advancing along the hall.

The reader is about to know more of this man's true character than Marcia Denvil herself knew. He was a "gambler in good luck."

A slight frown contracted his handsome brow as he approached the spot where Old Het was standing.

"What brings you here?" he asked, in any thing but a pleased tone of voice.

"Business," she answered, briefly.

"Confound it, woman, do you mean <

FROGS.

BY H. M. C.

Down among the dewy rushes,
Where the rippling brooklet gushes,
Nestling down among the bushes,
See the frogs.

Hear their dreary, dismal croaking,
While their little feet they're soaking;
We think they're cross; they're only joking,
Are the frogs.

Oh, that animal amphibious!
Of cold water only so subsisting,
You seem to say, "Kind Christians, pity us,
We are frogs."

How I wonder how it seems,
When at night the moonlight gleams,
Do you animals have dreams
Of other frogs?

Of tadpoles young and frogs so old,
That naughty boys both bad and bold
Have tortured, and to caterers sold
The legs of frogs.

That epicures so much do relish,
And all pronounce perfectly deli-
cious, and ahead of any fish?
Pray tell us, frogs.

We can not tell—no man can gauge
The hidden charm of your language,
So we'll postpone till another age
Our ode to frogs.

Pearl of Pearls: OR, CLOUDS AND SUNBEAMS.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "HOODWINKED," "HERCULES, THE
HUNCHBACK," "FLAMING TALISMAN," "BLACK
CRESCENT," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.—CONTINUED.

It was with a thrill of horror that Pearl
recognized her old enemy and persecutor.

Despair, dread, a feeling of a soul op-
pressed—all these preyed overwhelmingly
upon her, as she gazed, with a terrified
expression, into the evil, sneering, triumphant
visage of the man from whose clutches she
had thought herself free.

He transferred his hold, in a painful grip,
to her wrist, and half-hissed, half-growled,
as he eyed her frowningly:

"So, yer tho't yer'd get away, eh? Yer
tho't yer'd beat me, eh? But yer was
wrong, gal; yer couldn't get away from
Rover, yer couldn't—"

"How—how did you find me?" she pant-
ed, while her heart was nearly standing
still, and her face turning pale as death.

"For, she knew the man was a brutal
wretch, a character to hesitate at nothing
that crossed the desires of his evil nature.
She trembled for herself; her tongue
refused to mold the utterance of her lips.

And he marked the fear his presence in-
spired, for he grinned devilishly, and
squeezed his hard hand tighter round her
wrist; while she struggled heroically to
keep down the outcry the pain of his rude
grasp threatened to force up.

"How did I find yer, gal? Why, I'd 'a'
found yer if yer'd gone to the other end of
the world. One o' my boys seen yer goin'
off with the other boy, an' 'e tracked yer.
He met my ole woman, an' told 'er what
was up, an' told 'er to tell me to come over
to Washington, that he'd meet me at the
depot when I got here. So 'e did. He's a
bright 'un, he is. He follered yer up here,
an' when I come over on the next train, I
saw 'im, an' 'e told me where you was, an'
I come here to watch for yer, an' I've
caught yer, an' I'll teach yer—"

"Oh! let go of me—let me go!" she
cried, making a frantic effort to release her-
self.

"Hold on here. No, yer don't, my chick.
None o' that now," threateningly, and only
gripping the harder.

"Let me go!" she wailed, fighting him
with her disengaged hand.

Rover saw that this thing would not do.
Her cries and the noise might attract the
attention of a policeman.

"Shut up that racket," he snapped, "or
I'll kill yer!"

"Let me go! Let me go!" she screamed.
"D—n yer! I'll—"

"Help! Help!" rung piercingly on the
still night air; and—

"Help it is!" echoed a voice, close at
hand.

Succor was near.

Rover vented a blasphemous oath, and
attempted to take her up in his arms.

But her struggles deflected him.

There was a quick footstep beside them;
a third party dashed upon the scene.

"Scoundrel!" uttered a deep voice.
Thud! fell a blow on the villain's head
that sent him reeling across the curb. Pearl
leaped to the protecting arms of her rescuer,
with a joyous cry.

Rover recovered himself, and, snarling a
malediction on the head of him who had so
opportunistically interfered, he strode forward
to retaliate, with his huge fists doubled, and
evil face red with rage.

"He'll kill you!" whispered Pearl, un-
easily.

"Kill who?—me? Guess not," was the
brief return; and he added, addressing
Rover: "Now—rascal!—you come within
two feet of me, and I'll riddle your head off,
by thunder!"

The street lamp shone full upon the faces
of the two men.

Of all the weapons with which to fight a
coward, the human eye is the keenest—for
a coward fears the glance of a brave and
honest man.

Pearl's rescuer eyed the fellow steadily,
fully prepared to meet any attack; and
Rover paused before him, hesitating.

"Now, you'd better be off, or I'll give you
some more of the same sort!" with a mean-
ing nod.

Rover wheeled abruptly from the spot,
looking back at them, and shaking his
clenched fist, while he muttered:

"I'll fix yer yet for this!—mind!"

"Well, girl, who is that wretch?" asked
Pearl's new friend, when Rover had dis-
appeared in the direction of the Friends'
meeting-house.

"Oh, he's a wicked, wicked man!" she ex-
claimed, with a shudder.

"Umph! Sould say he was. But who is
he?"

"I don't know, except that his name is
Rover. I escaped from him, in Baltimore,
only to-day—"

"Escaped from him, eh?"

"Yes, sir. He had me confined in a
damp, dirty cellar, and said he would keep
me there until I promised to—to—steal,"
and her head bowed, and the last words came
whisperingly from her lips.

"Steal, eh? The rogue!"

"But I got away from him," she con-
tinued. "He had other children there, and
one of them helped me out. I would have

been in his power again, though, if it hadn't
been for you; and he's so wicked, I don't
know what he might have done to me."

"Torn you to pieces, perhaps—the tiger-
ly ruffian! But, come now, you'd better
run ho—Do you live in Washington?"

"Yes, sir, I did—"

"Do, eh? So. Well, you'd better run
home now—run along. I'll watch you till
you're out of sight. Guess there's no
danger; and—"

But Pearl did not move.

"Well, why don't you go?"

She looked pleadingly up into his not un-
kind face, and there were tears gathering in
her eyes.

"Oh, sir! I have no home to go to. I
am all alone in the world—all alone."

"Eh? Why, you said you lived here, in
Washington?"

"So I did, at one time; but that's past.
And it was a happy, happy home, until they
told me papa was dead. From that hour,
all that could make a young life like mine
miserable came to fill my heart with sorrow.
I am not a beggar, sir; time was—and it's
only a short week ago—when all that mind
could wish for, or wealth furnish, was given
me. But papa—papa—died; and—and—
—mamma—she's gone far away—maybe I'll
never see her again. When I came back to the
dear old house, to-night, it was all de-
serted and dark—not one sign to welcome
me. All my dear friends are gone; no one
of them knows how unfortunate I have
been; and I have thought that God would
be merciful, if he called me to Him."

She buried her face in her hands, and the
tears that were ready to start, now poured
down her cheeks, as she sobbed out her bit-
terness of spirit.

He looked at her with widened eyes, as
he listened to this utterance of woe, and
was astonished at the language—so correct
and soulful—with which the (to him) mere
child made known so much of her trouble.

"Bless my heart!" he exclaimed, still
staring, and he added, immediately, in his
blunt way, though a little softer:

"Well, now, this won't do—never in the
world fix things right. Come—"

"Where to?" she asked, looking up
through her tears, while a sweet hope arose
in her bosom.

"Where to? Why, to my house, of
course! Come along."

"Oh, sir! Do you mean it?—will you
take me to your house?—for I believe you
are kind-hearted—you look so."

"Mean it! Gad! of course I mean it. I
feel wonderfully interested in you. So,
come along now. Come."

Pearl's heart beat with joy as she started
off with him, for she felt sure she could not
be mistaken in believing him to be a man
of generous heart and sincere nature.

"What's your name, my girl?"

"Pearl."

"Pearl? What else?"

"Never mind my other name, please."

For, abrupt as had been the question, as
suddenly it had flashed upon her, that, to
tell her full name might make a "scandal" in
that society where her stepmother was
so extensively known; and she resolved
that nothing should be said against "mam-
ma," even if Cassa had been right, when
she said that Paine and her stepmother were
plotting in common against her.

And though he insisted, she was firm.
Her last name was held sacred and un-
uttered.

She had, indeed, at last found a friend.

At his house, he ordered the servants to
supply her every want, and attended to all
that could make her comfortable and con-
tented.

On the staircase, he bade her good-night,
and said, as he held her hand a moment:

"Get a good sleep. I want you to look
rosy in the morning."

Then, as she left him, and followed the
servant-maid up to her room, he gazed after
her, and uttered to himself:

"By George! I'm wonderfully interested
in that girl. I must know more about her.
Wonder who she is, anyhow?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

INNOCENT OR GUILTY?

It was a blessed haven that had opened
to Pearl.

Cyrus Cruftold, her new-found friend,
was a blunt-spoken man of some forty odd
years, yet sincere of nature, generous of
heart, and not the one to refuse that aid
which it was in his power to render the un-
happy child.

His residence was not far from Pearl's re-
cent home; but, as he had not been at the
Capital much over a month, he had not, as
yet, heard much of Mrs. Rochestine, though
the name was familiar to him.

He was from New York—himself and
family, of wife and servants with an in-
timate friend of his wife's, who had not long
been in America.

It was a cozy, comfortable room to which
Pearl was conducted, after exchanging
"good-night" with her friend, and the
young girl slept soundly—a feeling of safety
and rest within her, that she had not known
for three weary days past.

When she awoke next morning, and pre-
pared to descend, she was glad to see, by
a glance at the mirror, that she could "look
rosy"—as Cyrus Cruftold had expressed it.

At sound of the bell, she went down-stairs.
Cruftold was at the foot of the balustrade,
evidently waiting for her, and, on her ap-
pearance, he extended both hands in a warm,
cheerful greeting.

"Good-morning," he said, in his blunt
way. "Ah! you've got the roses on your
cheeks. 'Um! Good. You slept well."

"Oh, yes"—taking the outstretched
hands, and smiling as she looked into his
kind face; "I did sleep very nicely. You
are very kind to me, Mr.—" not till then
did it strike her that she had not ascertained
the name of him to whom she felt so grate-
ful, and she blushed as she hesitated.

"Cruftold's my name," Cruftold he
prompted; then added: "and Cruftold is a
friend of yours. Come now, we'll go in to
breakfast. Don't be timid at all."

But Pearl was a little timid, notwithstand-
ing, as he led the way to the breakfast-hall;
and she kept close by his side, as if she
feared that she might still further need his
protection.

Two ladies were seated at the table.

One of these was Mrs. Cruftold. The
other was Estelle Berkely.

The latter was not so fleshy a woman as
when we last saw her; her face had lost
much of its natural color, the half-imper-
ious, queenly carriage of the head was miss-
ing; and the eyes, that were once so bril-
liant and piercing, were now a little heavy,
and, at times, restless in their expression.

Something was gnawing at the woman's
heart; mind and body were suffering.

Mrs. Cruftold, Miss Berkely—a surprise
for you," said Cyrus Cruftold, as he gently
pushed Pearl forward.

They gazed in astonishment.

"Why, Cyrus, what does this mean? Who
is this?"

Estelle was looking hard at the child, a
strange, bewildered light in her eyes, as she
scanned the features of the unexpected
comer.

"It means," replied Cruftold, "that this
is Miss Pearl, a dear young friend of mine
—stop: explanations in due time, Mrs.
Cruftold. No more at present. Pearl, sit
down—here, alongside of me."

Mrs. Cruftold was mystified. But she
asked no further questions; for, when her
husband said "no more at present," she
knew that importunities would be useless.

As Pearl's name was uttered, Estelle
started slightly, and there was a scarce per-
ceptible arching of her brows. A look of
recognition swept, for a second, over her
face.

Pearl deposited herself in a way that de-
lighted Cyrus Cruftold. He soon discovered
that she was educated far beyond her years
—in short, that she was a woman in all but
age.

Each moment that passed found him
more and more interested, until, in his en-
thusiastic attentions, his habits of bluntness
almost entirely vanished, and smiles that
were rarely seen on his face, were follow-
ing his speeches in rapid succession.

Mrs. Cruftold marked the scene with half-
jealous eyes.

After breakfast, Cyrus Cruftold escorted
his protegee into the parlor. In one corner
stood a guitar of rare workmanship, and, as
Pearl caught sight of it, she could have
leaped toward it and grasped it in her eager
hands.

She had one at her old home, and had
been carefully instructed in its use. Many
a pleasant hour had been passed in com-
pany with it, playing or singing, too, the
little tunes or songs, she knew her father
liked so well. It was one of her favorites.

"What a beautiful guitar!" she exclaim-
ed, clasping her hands, and gazing long-
ingly at the instrument.

"Eh? Can you play on it?"

"Oh, yes; I'm very fond of it."

In a trice, he had seated her on a sofa, and
placed the guitar in her lap.

"Now then, play—go on," and his eyes
danced as he watched her intently.

"Shall I sing, too?" she asked.

"Sing? Of course—by all means! Sing."

It was a sweet, stirring song that the
young girl rendered—accompanying herself
on the guitar with clear, mellow, liquid
chords.

He listened raptly.

The ladies, who had retired to a window,
ceased their conversation as the child's
voice—which was cultured beyond belief—
awoke soft, murmuring strains of music
such as had never before been heard in the
broad parlors of that fashion-draped edifice.

"Bravo! Bravo!" he exclaimed, deli-
ciously, clapping his hands when she had
finished.

"Ladies, did you hear? There's
music in that."

"Oh, yes," interrupted Mrs. Cruftold,
carelessly; "we often hear a melodious ditty
on the curbstone of the street—by children
who never knew who their parents were.
But—ayho!" (a half sigh and yawn)—"I
suppose music is all the more enchanting
from the lips of an artful siren," and with
a curl of her aristocratic lip, she turned
again to look out through the window.

The guitar high fell from Pearl's lap.
The inspiration out her to the heart, and
there was an expression of acute pain in
her lovely face, as the deep-blue eyes turned
quickly on the speaker.

Cyrus Cruftold reddened to the temples.
He wheeled upon his wife with a sudden-
ness that was alarming. And, for the first
time since his marriage, he spoke harshly.

"Madam, understand me: this is no mere
street child—no common waif—no offspring
of shame—no escaped straw from a bed of
vice! She is a good, pure, beautiful girl,
whom I love—do you hear me, madam?
whom I love! And we will do well to
hope that our children may be as finely cul-
tured as she is. I say again, madam: do
you understand me?"

It was the outburst of an honest anger—
the justified resentment of a true cham-
pion.

An ominous stillness fell upon them.

Pearl went to the side of the woman who
had spoken the unkind words.

"Madam," she said, in her low, sweet
voice, "I'm very, very sorry that you
think any thing wrong of me. Indeed, my
name is as good as yours—untainted and as
high in standing. But if my presence is
unpleasant to you, I'll go away, at once.
Shall I?"

And Estelle Berkely, looking out through
the window-pane, thought to herself:

"Yes, little one, if any thing, your name
is better than hers. I know you, Pearl Ro-
chestine, and I am wondering what all this
mystery means."

Before Pearl had ceased
speaking, Cyrus pulled her away, with
"No, you won't do any thing of the
kind! You'll stay right here, in this
house, just as long as you please, and those
who don't like the arrangement can make
the best of it—"

"I can not intrude," protested Pearl.

"But you shall! If you don't stay of
your own accord, I'll lock you up! Ma-
dam"—to Mrs. Cruftold—"probably you
imagine that I am mad—but I am not; I
am angry—I am surprised—hear? Don't
let this thing happen again in my house. I
regret that it has even gone this far—but
this child worships the same God I do, and,
by her purity and golden attributes, de-
mands protection!" and he drew Pearl to
him affectionately, while she could have
fallen on her knees before him, in her
gratefulness of heart.

He was indeed a protector.

He was angered almost to spitefulness;
for in his generous heart the friendless
child had already won a place of affection,
that no outside influence could disturb, ex-
cept to strengthen.

"Come," he said, "play another tune—
for me."

"No, Mr. Cruftold, I can not play again."

He saw what she meant, and chafed the
more.

"On the piano, then—can you play on
the piano?"

"Yes, a little—"

"Play for me, then. I say, for me."

"Don't ask me, Mr. Cruftold. I would
be glad to do any thing to please you, but—
I'll never touch another instrument in your
house again—never."

He took her gently by the wrist, and
strode out into the hall.

"Go to your room now, Pearl, and don't
give anybody a chance to hurt your feel-
ings. I've got to go out. I'll be back soon,
and we'll take a ride together—and go shop-
ping, too. Remember: if you run away,
I'll send detectives after you, and bring you
back," and ere Pearl knew what he intended,
he snatched a quick kiss from her lips
—then slapped on his hat and went out,
banging the door after him.

Mrs. Cruftold did not learn any thing
from her husband, in regard to the child,
as a consequence of this little domestic ex-
plosion; the days went by, without an ex-
planation of the mystery, and her curiosity
augmented in proportion, with no prospects
of its satisfaction.

Estelle Berkely made friends with Pearl.
She sought out the young girl, every day—
was kind and affectionate toward her.

The child did not dream that the woman
who was gradually winning her love had
encompassed the destruction of her father.

A sort of remorse had seized upon Es-
telle Berkely; and, in that feeling, she was
striving to atone, by forcing herself to love
the child of the man whose infatuation
with her had led him to the point of a ri-
val's sword.

She knew well enough who Pearl was,
but kept the knowledge to herself, while
she assisted Cyrus Cruftold in making her
happy.

But she wondered, all the time, how it
was that Pearl happened in such circum-
stances. Cruftold told her all he had learn-
ed from the young girl's lips; but Pearl
would not disclose more than what she had
uttered on the night she first met the gen-
erous friend who was doing so much for
her, and who, by his acts of kindness, was
sowing sunbeams through the clouds of her
eventful life.

To their repeated questions she was firm,
yet gently reluctant.

So the first week went by. The second
had nearly slipped round, when one day,
while Pearl and Estelle were seated in the
parlor, glancing over some drawings, the
latter asked, suddenly:

"What are you thinking about, Pearl?"

"Tell me."

"I will, Miss Berkely. I've made up my
mind to go away."

"What! Oh, no—quit jesting. Those
are serious words, Pearl."

"And I feel serious when I speak so,
Miss Berkely."

She saw that the child was deeply in ear-
nest.

"Why, Pearl, what can this mean?"

"Maybe I am wrong," she said, gazing
down, and speaking in a hushed tone, "but
I think I am right. Mrs. Cruftold almost
hates me—and I don't know why, for I
have tried ever so hard to deserve her love.
Ever since the day I came here, she has
kept away from me, wherever I move; and
I can see that Mr. Cruftold is worried about
it. I don't want to make their lives unhap-
py—I know too well what sorrow is, to
bring it on any one; so I've made up my
mind to go away—though it will nearly
break—my heart—"

"She has a soul of gold!" thought Estelle
Berkely, as her bosom warmed anew to-
ward the child.

Ere they could speak further, a servant
announced two visitors without cards.

Estelle glanced up in surprise; then a
startled look came into her face.

"Visitors? to see me?"

"Yes'm."

"Admit them."

The comers were Kirk Brand and Neal
Hardress.

"Is this Miss Estelle Berkely?" he asked,
politely, though it was only politeness, for
he knew her well.

"It is," she answered, rising.

MY CHILDHOOD.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Ah, dear, I never can forget
My childhood's early days,
When innocence was on my brow—
Molasses on my face.

I gathered pleasure day by day,
Yet I improved my mind
By turning over wisdom's page—
And riding on behind.

Bright over me in gladness shone
The sun that never swerves,
While my feet were in duty's path—
My hands in the preserves.

I lived within the present then;
I thought 'twould never cease;
And every hour I slipped delight—
And stoned old Jones' geese.

Time rested lightly on my head,
And I at ease could scoff,
For oh, I had the kindest home—
The mumps, and whooping cough.

Bright dreams enhanced my slumbers then
Of all things fair and good,
I built my castle in the clouds—
But mostly in the mud.

The early playmates of my youth
Their memory never dies;
How firm together did we cling—
And gouge each other's eyes!

A Green Hand.

BY LAUNCE POINTEZ.

MANY a boy thinks of the life of a sailor as one full of pleasure and excitement, and longs to go to sea. Especially is this the case in times of peace, when every thing on land seems so tame, and all the adventures to be met with are found in the paths of commerce in the great deep.

At such times all the wild boys that get a chance go to sea, and many of them find out, only too soon, that it's a hard, hard life.

I was brought up to it, and didn't mind the hardships. My father and grandfather, with all their ancestors, since the settlement of Massachusetts, had been sailors, bred up in the best of schools, the Nantucket whaling fleet. I furling the main-royal before I was twelve years old, and at twenty-five I was second-mate aboard the ship *Nightingale*, on the Liverpool line, when we took young William Barlow as a green hand.

William was a tall, stout young fellow, good-looking, active and obliging, but, as soon as he came aboard, our chief mate, a man named Grubb, seemed to take a violent dislike to him.

Grubb was a coarse, ill-conditioned man, very brutal and domineering to the sailors, and universally hated. Even the captain didn't seem to like him much, and never spoke to him except on duty, but Grubb was a first-class sailor, and even the worst grumblers among the men admitted that he knew what he was about.

We had a splendid crew that voyage, the only green hand aboard being young Barlow, and on him it seemed all the ill-humor of the mate found an especial pleasure in venting itself. It so happened that William had the same name as the senior partner in the house our vessel belonged to, and we in the fore-cabin used to joke him about it, and ask him to get his uncle, old Ezra Barlow, to give us better grub.

Now Grubb heard this, and didn't take it as a joke, as we meant it. He took it into his head that we were grumbling about him, and he vowed vengeance upon all of us, especially on young Barlow, who was quite innocent.

"I'll give your uncle's nephew enough to do, my lad," he said to him. "I'll make you wish you'd shipped in some other name. I'll be a good enough Grubb for you, while you last."

And he kept his word, in the cruel sense in which he had meant. From the day we left New York, young Barlow was subjected to a series of petty persecutions that often made my blood boil, by the tyrannical chief mate.

The young fellow had never been to sea before in his life, and consequently he was very sea sick, but Grubb got him on his watch, and sent him to work, sick or well. I used often to see him slung out under the bowsprit, with the heavy head-seas dashing over him, scraping the ship's bows, a thing I never saw before out at sea.

Grubb gave him all the hard work he could, and when there was nothing else to do, he'd set him at coiling all the ropes on deck, man-of-war style.

Barlow did better than I expected he would under these persecutions. He was a very good-tempered fellow, with a stout, healthy frame, and very anxious to learn all he could of seamanship.

"Never mind, Coffin," he said to me once. "I know that he means it for ill-nature, but I'm learning all the time, you know, and the more hard work he gives me, the more I learn of seamanship. Some day I shall command a vessel of my own, and then I may want Grubb for a mate myself. I'd show him, then, the difference between a gentleman and a brute."

Nothing Grubb could do seemed to anger him, and really the cheerfulness and good will with which he obeyed the surly orders of the mate would have softened any one else, I should have thought. But Grubb was cross-grained as an old locust log, and nothing Barlow did pleased him.

So things went on for some days. The mate had never yet struck Barlow, not from want of will, but because the latter never gave him an opportunity. He was always too prompt in obeying orders. Our skipper was a good sort of man, too, and as long as he was on deck never allowed any brutality toward the men.

At last, when about three weeks out, we sighted the coast of Ireland, and began to indulge in hopes of a remarkably short voyage, in which we were doomed to disappointment.

Toward evening the wind chopped round, and came howling over the sea in a cold, biting gale from the east, against which we could not make a foot of headway, and were kept beating up and down outside of that Irish coast, a strong current sending us further and further every day.

At last the skipper got disgusted, wore ship, and stood off to the south, hoping to catch a different wind on the southern track of the steamers. Sure enough, when we'd run about two or three hundred miles, we met a southwester, which took us safely into the Chops of the Channel at last.

It was here that Grubb's ill-humor at last ended in personal attack on poor innocent Will Barlow, which came near costing the latter his life.

The skipper was below in his berth at the time, dog-tired from his work of the last three days, when he had hardly slept a

wink. It was toward the end of Grubb's watch, and I had just come on deck to get ready for mine, when I heard Grubb's surly voice, with a volley of oaths to season it, shouting:

"You, Bill Barlow, you lazy, good-for-nothing lubber, why haven't you coiled that clew line properly? I'll teach you to come aboard with your owner's names and landsman's airs, coming the sea-lawyer's games over me, curse you!"

And then I saw Grubb give a kick to a mass of rope at the edge of the round-house and send the end flying into the waist.

"Now, curse you, go to work and coil that rope properly, sir," he continued, as Barlow came up to him, and the mate shook his fist in his face.

Now most men would have looked a little sulky at such a style of ordering, but Barlow seemed to be quite unmoved.

He simply touched his hat with a smile, and said:

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"What the devil are you grinning at, you green-faced baboon?" demanded the mate, savagely.

He seemed to be dreadfully irritated by the other's smile.

"Nothing, sir," said Barlow, civilly. But the soft answer did not turn away the mate's wrath in this instance.

"I'll teach you to grin at me, you infernal, land-loading, lantern-jawed baboon!" he roared; and before I could clearly make out what was the matter, he had knocked poor Barlow down with his brawny fist, on the deck at the foot of the mizen-mast.

"Grin at me, will you?" he bellowed a second time, as Barlow, now at last roused to resistance, looked angrily up, and scrambled half to his feet.

"Take that, ye worthless loafer!" and at the same moment he gave the poor fellow a violent kick in the side, that sent him again to the deck.

"Mr. Grubb! Mr. Grubb! For God's sake don't kill me!" was all the poor young fellow could utter, as the mate, seemingly roused to frenzy, lifted up his heavy boot again and let it drive with all his force into Barlow's chest and stomach.

I was thoroughly horrified, for the blood



A GREEN HAND.

gushed out of the poor fellow's mouth and he rolled over on his face with a low groan, and lay writhing there. I ran up the round-house ladder in a hurry, I tell you, just in time to stop Grubb from kicking him again.

In those days I was pretty mortal strong, boys, and I had no cause to fear Grubb, as I was the next officer.

"See here, Grubb, leave him alone," I said, pushing the brute back. "I saw all this, and I shall tell the captain what I saw."

"What do you mean by interfering between me and the men, Coffin?" he asked, sulkily. "That fellow's manner's been insolent ever since he came aboard, curse him, and now I've paid him off!"

But the noise had roused up the skipper, and he came out of the cabin in a hurry to know what was the matter.

"It's that Bill Barlow giving me sarce," said Grubb, instantly. "I guess he won't give me no more, though. I've settled his hash."

"Captain Rogers," said I, "I don't often interfere between superior officers, but I saw this whole disturbance, and I'll answer, sir, that Barlow did not say a single violent word, while Mr. Grubb knocked him down and stamped on him, without any provocation."

The skipper looked puzzled and annoyed. A row between officers, in which one has to be blamed, is always disagreeable to a captain.

"Mr. Grubb," he said, in a low tone, "this is too bad. You must not be so brutal to the men."

He turned to Barlow, who still lay on the deck, but had stopped writhing.

"Barlow," he said, "get up and go to your berth."

Barlow made no answer or movement. I shook him and then we discovered that he was senseless.

Mohenesto:

OR,
Trap, Trigger and Tomahawk.

BY HENRY M. AVERY,
(MAJOR MAX MARTINE.)

VI.—Guide Across the Mountains.—The Cockney Englishman.—Our Reception among the Teton Sioux.—Prairie Dogs.—Their Villages and Habits.—The Burrowing Owl.—Where they Live.—Rattlesnakes.—Antidote for the Bite.—Practice what you Preach.—John Bull on the Retreat.—Two Sides to a Story.—To the Columbia and back.—Small-pox Among the Indians.—Treatment of it.—Leaving the Sioux.

IN the spring of 1859 I engaged with a party of English gentlemen to guide them

from Fort Union to Walla-Walla, from whence they were to proceed to Astoria, and thence down the coast to Sacramento.

The party consisted of thirteen, besides the cook, five servants and myself; twenty persons in all—well mounted and well armed. They were traveling for pleasure alone, and consequently were in no hurry; and, as they paid me well for my services, I did not care how much time they consumed in making the trip.

One of the party was a regular Cockney, who expressed himself as thoroughly disgusted with the "blasted country," and every night would wish himself back in "Hold Hingland."

He may have been a real lord in his own country for aught I know, but to me he seemed a pretty fair illustration of

"How much the dance who has been sent to roam,
Exceeds the dance who has been kept at home."

He had not as yet seen any Indians, with the exception of a few dirty specimens about the forts, and he was continually bragging of the exploits he would perform, should we meet with a hostile party.

I resolved to take some of the conceit out of him, should occasion ever offer, and thus furnish him a chapter in the book which he was to write as soon as he got "ome," of "America as it is." He was not a favorite with any of the party, and I could never imagine what circumstances could have induced them to take him into their company.

I decided to take a new route, which would lead us through the best hunting-grounds in the world, and also through the country of the Tetons, from whom I had run away. I felt an uncontrollable desire to see my old friends, especially my Indian wife, and concluded I would remain with them after I had completed the job on hand.

The scenery of the portion of Montana through which we passed was romantic and beautiful. Crossing a long stretch of prairie, we came upon a prairie-dog village, the first that the Englishmen had ever seen. A thousand heads were popping up above their houses as we rode along; and for the sake of the fun, I made a wager with the "Cockney" that he could not kill one of them. He was a boastful disciple of Nim-

quainted with an owl to which none of these associations can belong: a bird that, so far from seeking refuge in the ruined habitations of man, fixes its residence within the earth; and instead of concealing itself in solitary recesses of the forest, delights to dwell on open plains, in company with animals remarkable for their social disposition, neatness and order. Instead of sailing heavily forth in the obscurity of the evening twilight, and then retreating to mope the intervening hours, our owl enjoys the broadest glare of the noontide sun, and flying rapidly along, searches for food or pleasures during the cheerful light of day.

In the trans-Mississippian territories, the burrowing owl resides exclusively in the villages of the marmot or prairie-dog, whose excavations are so commodious as to render it unnecessary that our bird should dig for himself, as he is said to do in other parts of the world, where no burrowing animals exist. The entrance to his hole is placed either at the top or on the side, and the whole mound is beaten down externally, resembling a much-used footpath.

From the entrance the passage into the mound descends vertically for one or two feet, and is thence continued obliquely downward, until it terminates in an apartment, within which the industrious marmot constructs, on the approach of the cold season, the comfortable cell for his winter's sleep. This cell, which is composed of fine dry grass, is globular in form, with an opening at the top capable of admitting the finger; and the whole is so firmly compacted that it might, without injury, be rolled over the floor.

In all the prairie-dog villages the burrowing owl is seen moving briskly about, or else in small flocks scattered among the mounds, and at a distance it may be mistaken for the marmot itself when sitting erect. They manifest but little timidity, and allow themselves to be approached sufficiently close for shooting; but, if alarmed, some or all of them soar away and settle down again at a short distance; if further disturbed, their flight is continued until they are no longer in view, or they descend into their dwellings, whence they are difficult to dislodge.

this country, I have entirely neglected my English party.

After a long trip, during which our party had enjoyed themselves to their hearts' content in hunting buffalo, antelope, and mountain sheep, we arrived at the Indian village I had deserted so long before.

A welcome was extended to the whole party, while my own reception was such as would be accorded to a friend whom we have supposed to be dead, but who appears after long years, again to mingle his life with ours. The following three days were devoted by the whole village to feasting and rejoicing, to the infinite amusement of the Englishmen, who thus obtained their first view of social life among the Indians.

The old chief was as glad to see me as if I had been an own son, while my little squaw was perfectly overjoyed; laughing and crying by turns. I did not suppose there was any person living to whom my going or coming could possibly be of any interest, and, for the first time in many years, I felt the pleasure of knowing that I was loved; and that love seemed precious to me, even though it came from a poor Indian girl.

We remained in the village nearly a week before any opportunity occurred to test the courage of the Cockney Englishman, until one morning he took his gun and started out for a hunt. The rest of the party remained in the village, and were well pleased when I told them my plan for testing the courage of their companion.

I took five Indians, and having rigged up in all the paint of a holiday dance, we started after the Cockney. He had gone about two miles from the village, and we found him sitting beside a tree smoking his pipe, as only he could.

Making a detour so as to get in front of him, and place him between me and the village, I secreted myself behind a tree, and fitting an arrow to the string, I made the shot. The arrow hit the tree not more than an inch above his head, and stuck there quivering. It was a thoughtless shot, indeed, for a slight depression would have cost him his life; but a miss is as good as a mile, and he started up with an exclamation of alarm, and looked about for the cause.

Stepping from behind the tree, I spoke a few words to him in the Sioux language, which I knew he could not understand, but instead of trying to shoot me, as I supposed he would, he dropped his gun and holding up his hands, exclaimed, "Please, good Mr. Indian, don't shoot!"

He stood trembling, like the arrant coward I knew him to be, when I sawing my knife, I gave the war-cry of the Tetons, and sprung toward him. With a yell of terror, he started on a run, leaving his pipe and gun on the ground. He ran well, and when opposite the spot where my Indian allies were concealed, they all discharged their guns in the air, and gave a whoop that would have frightened a more courageous man than he. Another cry of terror, and with accelerated speed he ran for the village, where he arrived out of breath, and nearly out of his wits with fright.

He gave a glowing account of how he had been attacked by at least a hundred Indians; and how he had shot four or five, and finally made his escape, with no loss but his pipe and gun.

We washed the paint from our faces, and returned to the village one at a time, and from different directions, so as not to excite any suspicions in his mind, should he chance to notice any of us.

In the evening I visited the tent of the white men, and listened to the story of the Cockney's late battle, which he now told for the twentieth time. I could not help laughing in his face, at the palpable falsehoods he had invented, and he was much offended thereat. I gave my version of the affair, which was received with shouts of laughter by the rest of the party, but a more crestfallen or disgusted Cockney I never saw.

I gave him his pipe and told him where he might find his gun, advising him to be sure and make his escape, and to be sure and make a chapter in his book. I never heard whether he published his book or not, but from that hour he never spoke to me, or bragged of his bravery in my presence.

The Englishmen were getting tired of the Indian country, so accompanied by twenty Sioux warriors we set out for Walla-Walla, where we arrived in safety. The morning after our arrival, we mounted our horses, and bidding the party good-by, were soon on our return to the village of the Sioux.

During my absence across the mountains, the small-pox had broken out among the tribe. This disease has been the worst enemy with which the Indians of America has had to contend. By terrible experience he has become familiarized with its ravages and has resorted to the most desperate remedies for its cure.

Among many tribes the afflicted are obliged to form camps by themselves; and this left alone, they die by scores. One of their favorite remedies, when the scourge first makes its appearance, is to plunge into the nearest water, by which they think to purify themselves.

This course, however, in reality tends to shorten their existence. When the small-pox rages among the Indians, a most unenviable position is held by their "medicine-man." He is obliged to give a strict account of himself; and if so unfortunate as to lose a chief, or other grand personage, is sure to pay the penalty by parting with his own life. The duties of the medicine-man among the Indians are so much mixed up with witchcraft and jugglery, so completely rude and unfounded as to principle, that it is impossible to define the practice for any useful end.

I had accidentally come into the knowledge of a simple and perfect remedy for the small-pox, and with the simple herbs of the forest can cure the worst case in twenty-four hours. Profiting by my knowledge, I took the place of the discomfited medicine-man, and in less than a week not a case could be found in the village.

I had been with the tribe about six months, when my little wife sickened and died. After this I became so lonesome, and the old feeling of restlessness returned, so that I again left the tribe: this time, however, with the knowledge and consent of all parties. Some day or other, should my life be spared, I shall visit them again, unless the remorseless fate which seems to hang over the race shall have swept them from the face of the earth. Certainly, I shall never find warmer or more true-hearted friends in this world than I have left among the Sioux.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 129.)

But, in describing some of the animals of